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*In secret official tests destroyers have been launched from a mother-ship to return again and attach themselves to her in mid-air.*

McCLURE'S MAGAZINE

VOL. LVII JULY, 1924 No. 3

# NEW AIR WONDERS

*Strange and Terrible Experiments that Outstrip Fiction*

BY

HARRY HARPER

*Technical Secretary of the British Civil Aerial Transport Committee*

CHOOSING to banish from its mind the terrors and sufferings of the last great war, the world is already embarking upon a feverish, costly piling up of those aerial armaments—growing more fearful in their power day by day—upon which no restriction was placed by the Washington Conference.

Where this mad new race may lead—to what brink of world-destruction it may bring us—it is one of the purposes of this article to show. Lest a reader—forgetting, perhaps, those rebukes to scepticism administered by the last war—should be prone to dismiss this article as some nightmare of the author, let it be said that the writer has made an uninterrupted study, for many years, of this one subject of aeronautics. He is familiar with what has been done aerially, before, during, and since the war, and he has knowledge of recent secret progress which, when it matures, will pale to insignificance all that has been achieved hitherto in the history of the air.

The new writing is on the wall already for those behind the scenes; a warning of coming horrors—fruit inexorable of a pitiless, never-sleeping science—which, could everyone visualize them as clearly as experts do, would arouse a chorus of protest such as has never been heard before.

Technicians and war experts at work on aerial developments are giving warnings. And great thinkers in all countries are beginning to clamor for some sort of limitation before it is too late. They feel that there must be an end of these deadly secret schemes for a remorseless, scientific, "press-the-button" slaughter—a slaughter not merely of fighting-forces but of vast, defenceless hosts—men, women, and children—far from the lines of actual war.

Secretly, behind the doors of remote laboratories, in secluded, lonely workshops, out upon distant waters or in the wide, free spaces of the upper air, science stands committed to a weird and potentially fearful battle of wits. Things which even romance writers have hesitated to put before their readers, fearing they might be thought far-fetched, are beginning to shape in actual, concrete fact.

Tanks that swim are being constructed; gaunt, slim "destroyers" that fly; and uncanny, silent hybrid craft which plunge beneath the water to hide themselves. There are to be crews of fearless men who, becoming almost superhuman, learn to live and work—and, when needed, fight—in and on three different elements, land, sea, and air.

The aim of it all is a new world-wide power—a power which reigns primarily up in the air, but which descends to land or water, which probes even beneath the surface of seas or oceans. This power will be swift, universal—devastating! Take, for example, one amazing development. It seems only a little time ago that, as a flight of fancy, fiction-writers were picturing some huge air machine, high aloft, which should have the power

of launching from it while it flew—to attack earth positions or other aircraft—a stream of small, hornet-like aeroplanes.

At the time such a notion was ridiculed. But the voices of disbelievers are heard no longer for the good reason that this launching of a plane from an experimental mother-airship and its flying back again to attach itself to her in mid-air, is actually being accomplished in secret official tests. Vast lighter-than-air machines, vertiable "aerodromes of the clouds" are in design and will soon be built. Filled with millions of cubic feet of buoyant gas and capable, if need be, of flying thousands of miles over land or sea, these "aerial mother-ships," will carry up with them, in addition to their weight of fuel and crew, a dozen or more steel-built fighting-planes. One by one, as the need arises, these fast-flying machines, each complete with its expert pilot, will be lowered beneath the air-ship's keel and launched for a swoop upon enemy battleships or for a demoralizing surprise attack upon some shore-station, defence or city.

Their task done, these aerial hornets will come winging their way skywards again to their high-flying mother-ship, each plane having a special mechanism which will enable it to make contact with a hanging hook device lowered from the airship. In this way the aeroplanes will take up their aerial moorings and be hauled aboard the great machine, which will act constantly as their base of operations.

It will be the object of the aerial mother-ship always to conceal herself as far as possible from the unwelcome attentions of hostile high-flying enemy "cruisers" and fighters. So she will move habitually at heights as great as several miles above the earth's surface. Her commander will be skilled in seeking cloud-banks, in order to escape detection by the aerial scouts and spies of the enemy's flying fleet.

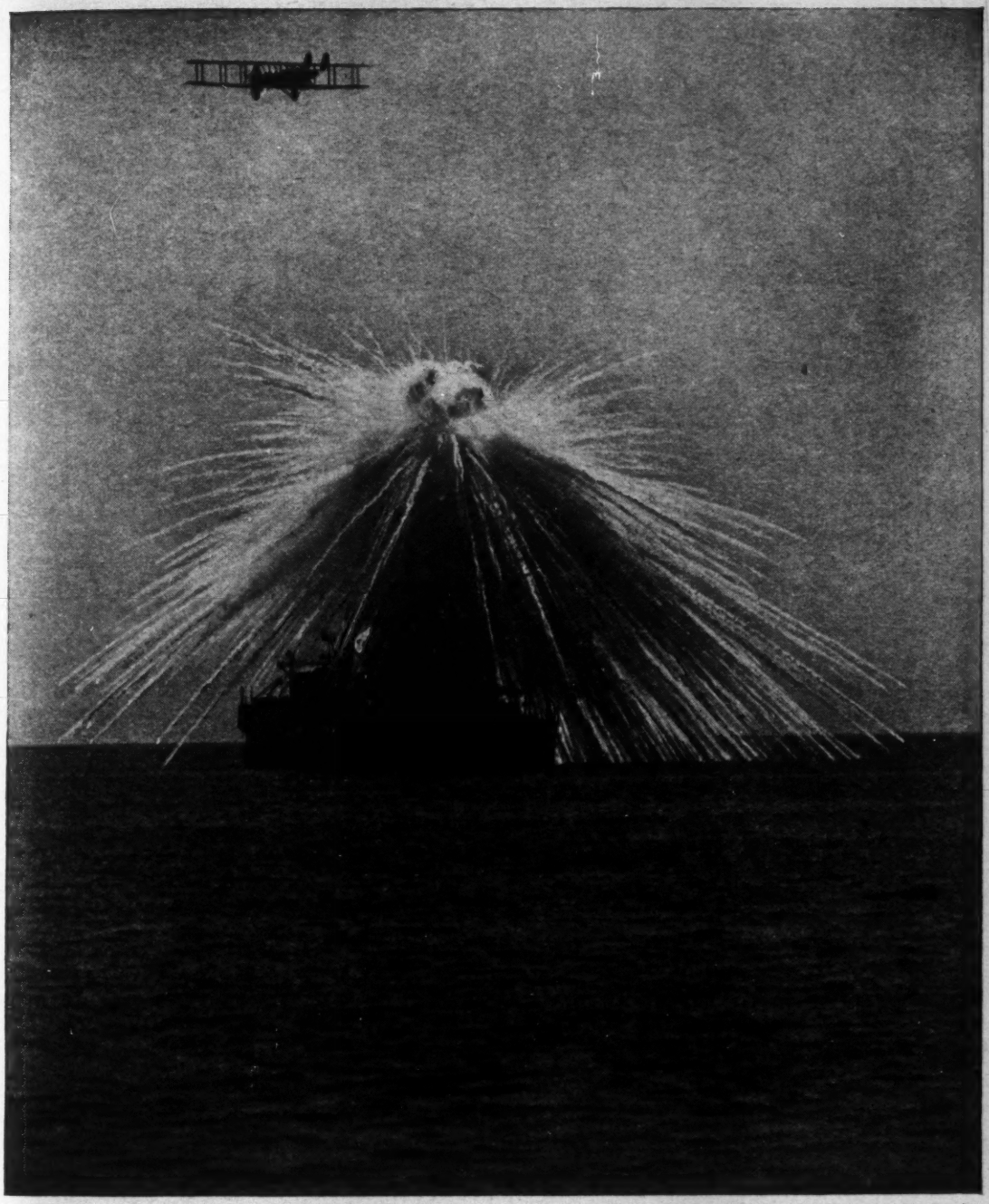
Again out-rivaling imagined machines of fertile minds is a weapon contemplated for employment from the lofty platform of one of these enormous aeroplane-carrying airships. This apparatus—only possible now that we are embarking upon a wonderful new era of metal construction in air machines—is a steel-prowed flying "ram."

Briefly the scheme is this. In front of a metal hull which will combine strength with an astonishing lightness, the "air-ram" will have a knife-like prow of steel. This will be its only weapon. It will neither fire guns nor discharge missiles. Its task will be to rush pell-mell upon some other air machine and hack and wound by the impact of its cutting, shearing ram. The whole design of the extraordinary machine will be directed to this one end. Its wings, built up in sections of steel, will be telescopic. The single occupant of the ram, sitting within an armored cockpit, will be able either to slide in these wings section by section till they are "reefed" along the sides of the hull or to thrust them out again till they function normally in the support of his machine.

The tactics of aerial ramming will be these: Shot forth into the air from the mother airship at a great altitude, the air-ram, its wings extended, will come rushing down through the sky—a veritable thunderbolt of metal! Its pilot, peering from his cockpit, will be on the look-out for such enemy aircraft as big "troop-planes," winged transports or great many-gunned aerial "dreadnoughts." A suitable quarry sighted, the steersman of the air-ram will become feverishly busy. First he will manoeuvre, aerially, till he is in precisely the position he desires. Then in one projectile-like dive he will fall, rather than fly, upon his ill-fated objective.

Just before he is about to strike, before the actual impact comes, the air-ram pilot will draw in his wings and also his air-screws, protecting his rear controlling-planes by thrust-out guards of steel. He will, in fact, in those last moments convert his machine into little more than a stream-lined tube of metal with the steel prow forward to do its work of destruction.

But the personal skill of the attack will lie not in just striking the quarry with a shattering shock anywhere. What the air-rammer will do, with deadly ingenuity, is to guide his machine to a hair's breadth, in those last seconds before the impact, so that his sharp ram cuts and breaks its way through either the enemy's vulnerable sustaining wings or his vital steering planes. The result will be that this stricken craft, dealt a death-blow, will reel and fall earthward, completely out of control.



Courtesy U. S. Army Air Service

*What happens when a 100-pound phosphorous bomb hits the fire control platform of a battleship; an umbrella of phosphorous vapor is almost immediately formed, making the sighting of guns very nearly impossible.*

After this the air-ram, itself uninjured, will extend its metal wings and start up its engine and screws, climbing again out of sight to prepare for another plunge.

Where will this war of wits end?

French air science, with that logic so triumphant when applied to a problem in mechanics, is about to transform the appearance of the aeroplane. Soon, when we see one of the newest of their

creations rushing through the air, we shall have to alter our previous notions as to what a flying machine looks like when aloft.

Pick up a model, marvellously-made, of one of these latest fruits of ultra-modern science and you have a queer feeling that there is something wrong about it somewhere. You look again. This machine has no body. There is hardly anything external about it at all. It is just a tapering, hollow wing, and, being so, it seems unfinished. You expect to see two or more other planes, a big hull, struts and spars, engines dotted here and there between the wings—the aeroplane, in fact, that we have in our mind's eye.

There are none of these, yet the transformation is so perfectly reasonable that, when its theory is explained, you can see there has been no abrupt departure from main theories of design. All that has been done is to effect a beautiful and, at the same time, extraordinarily effective simplification.

As soon as the science of using light-weight metals for wing construction became something more than an experiment, the agile-minded French technician, with his eye always to the graceful as well as the practical, said to himself:

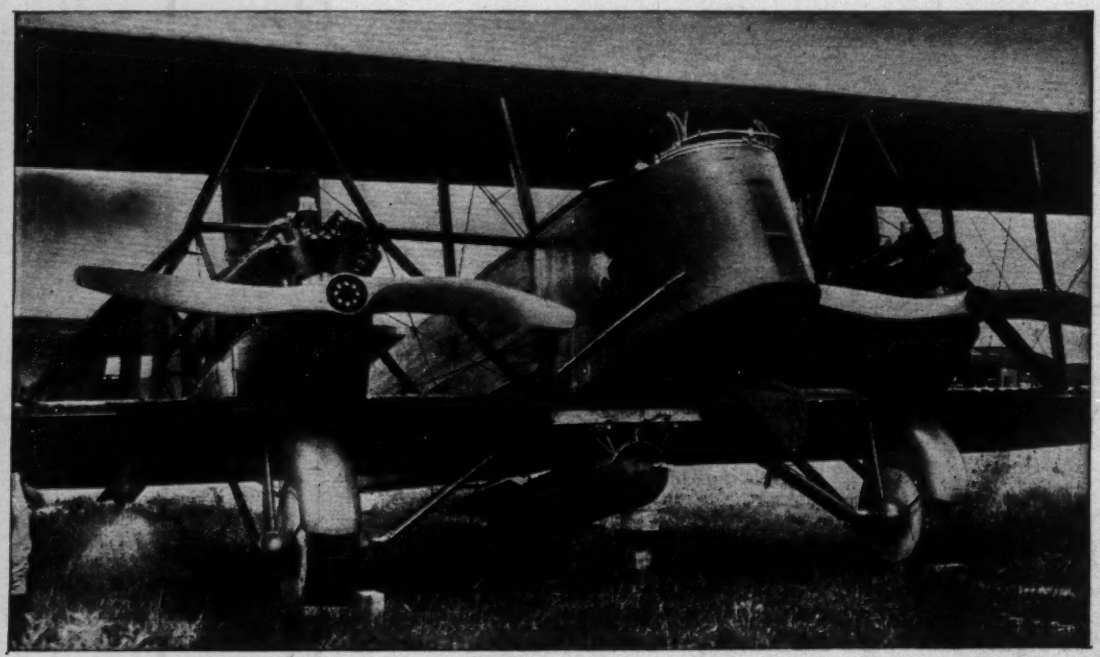
"If we can build a hollow wing big enough, why be content any longer with the air-resistance set up by an external body? Why not put everything—passengers, motors, crew and fuel—inside the wing? Why not an air machine which is just a flying wing?"

To-day that idea has so progressed that the most advanced French technique is preparing to build craft of an extraordinary size and beauty of outline. A vast, hollow, delicately-tapered metal wing represents the whole of the machine with the exception of rear controlling-surfaces, a landing-chassis, and the air-screws which are mounted in front of the wing to take the drive of engines housed within.

In the meanwhile even experts confess their astonishment at the world-race which has begun in the construction of great sea-going, multi-engined hulls, surmounted by vast "sails," or wings. After cleaving the surface of the water prior to taking flight, they rush high through the air at twice the speed of the fastest train.

Those German masters of lightweight metal construction, Professor Junkers and Herr Dornier, have entered into a collaboration to produce super-giant aircraft. The greatest of these leviathans is to be a colossal three-hulled flying ship weighing as much as 1,000 tons.

To drive this enormous machine



Courtesy U. S. Army Air Service

*The Martin bomber carries the bomb below ready to be dropped on land or sea target.*

Courtesy U. S. Army Air Service

*The giant Barling bomber, the largest bombing plane in the air service, could carry ten airplanes. It is 120 feet from tip to tip and weighs 20 tons.*

through the air, Professor Junkers intends to employ a series of great semi-Diesel, oil-burning engines, such as he has been adapting to aerial use. There are to be four mighty groups of these motors, driving huge air-screws through gearing. By such gargantuan craft passengers in hundreds, accommodated with all the luxury of a great modern steamship, in addition to quantities of urgent merchandise and mails, will, according to calculations, be lifted into the air, for swift, non-stop, trans-ocean flights.

Nor does this exhaust our list of marvels which impend.

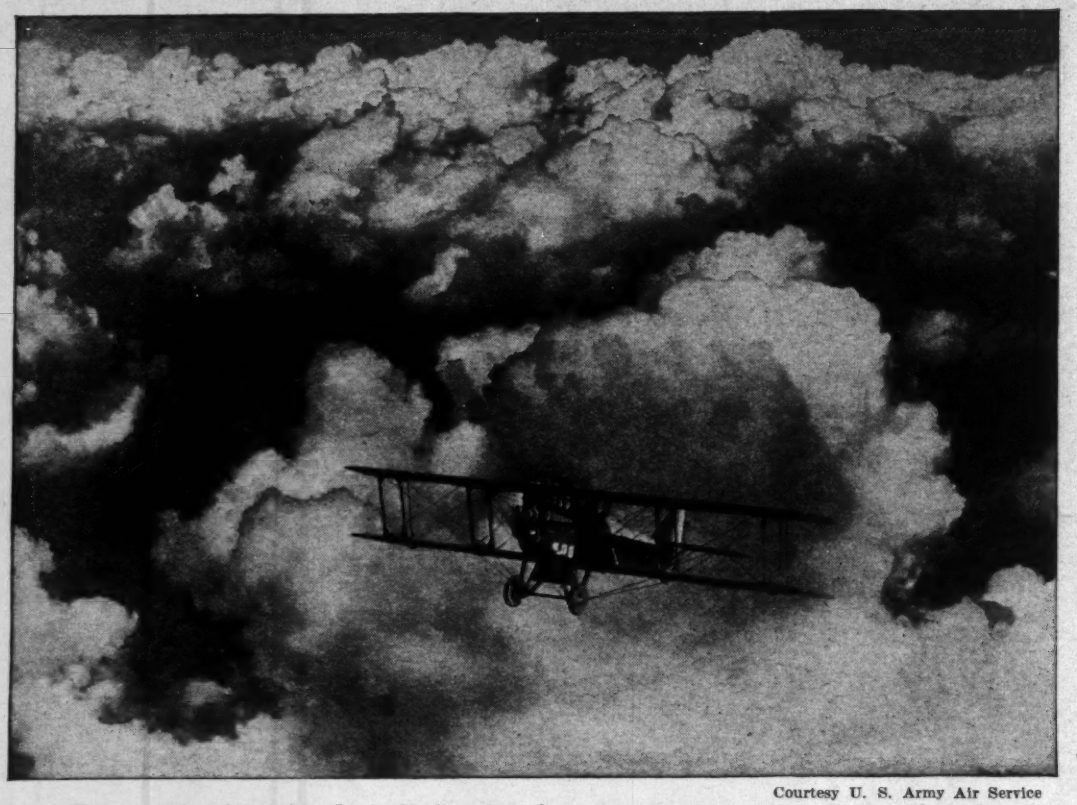
Secret designs are in hand for extraordinary machines with great pneumatic-tired wheels, which will rush like super-tanks along the surface of the land. They will be able to sweep down a beach and, breasting the water like some living thing, speed at an immense rate across the surface of the sea; or, extending wings of metal, leave earth or sea for that other element, the air. A new machine which is literally everything in one—an amazing "multum-in-parvo" which fights like a tank on earth; which is a sort of super-destroyer on the water; which climbs to give combat in the air; and which, when concealment is required, can fold its wings, seal its hull, and dive like a submarine beneath the surface of the sea.

Science coins a new word for such uncanny monsters. They are "tessaurians"—meaning, in a free adaptation from the Greek, machines which live in four elements—that is to say on the sea, under the sea, and also up in the air and on the surface of the land. Their crews—given power of going anywhere or doing anything, in any corner of the globe—are called "land-sea-air-men."

Who, by the way, will be the first supermen actually to live up in the air?

Great airways, raising higher and higher their invisible "lines," find that they must know not only what atmospheric conditions are like near the earth, but also what the weather is doing miles above the clouds.

So the intention is to send skyward, till they pass higher than the eye can follow, a series of huge wide-winged, man-lifting kites. One of these, enter-



Courtesy U. S. Army Air Service

*The machine in which J. A. MacCready tried to break the world's altitude record.*

ing vast, steadily blowing upper "windways," will hold taut a steel cable, stretching upward from the earth. Attached to this cable and harnessed by wires to a second string of tugging kites will be what is described as an "aerial island." Actually it will be a small, completely-equipped meteorological station and—its "staff" having entered it for their spell of duty above the clouds—it will be drawn smoothly by its kites up the main cable. Then, checked in its ascent at any height desired, it floats in the aerial ocean, its occupants busy with the observations they will telephone down to earth.

Such men, living up somewhere near aerial highways, eating and sleeping and doing their regular spells of duty, with nothing beneath them but thousands of feet of empty air, will be the ultra-modern equivalent of our watchers on lonely lightships.

"One day," said Mr. Edison recently, "science will invent a machine so terrible—so absolutely terrifying—that man himself, who consents to risk torture and death in order to inflict torture and death, will be appalled and renounce war for ever."

What will this machine be?

Can we, to-day, get even a glimmering of what it will be like, of what horrors those who control it may seek to launch upon the world.

We can. The terror is, in certain preliminary aspects, already taking shape.

It was only the other day, turning from laboratory to flying ground, that science built a secret machine which was an experiment in making aircraft less visible. This machine had a single lifting-wing. Its engine and pilot's seat were sunk in that wing. The whole craft was treated with a queer, dull-looking dope. The aim of that machine, flying at two miles a minute, was to steal in and launch a torpedo at a battleship; and the idea of its fine, sword-like wing, and its absence of anything external to catch the eye, was to enable it to get closer, without being seen, than any aircraft of ordinary construction would be likely to do.

That machine has been experimented with. But, as tests have been carefully guarded, all that is known is that the machine *has* been able to creep in sur-

prisingly near before the eyes of trained watchers have been able to detect it.

In any case this is a beginning. The aim science has before it—and who can say it will not be attained?—is so to camouflage a swiftly-moving air machine, so to eliminate tell-tale shadows, that this machine is to all intents and purposes invisible.

Coincident with this research is another. This, showing already remarkable progress, is so to eliminate the sound an airplane makes as it rushes through the air that it becomes practically noiseless. This is not merely a question of silencing motors. It is a question of the wail of whirling air-screws, the whistle of wires. Silencing of high-powered aero-engines is already an accomplished fact. The mechanism exists; it is being employed. And in air-screw design—which includes marvellous mechanisms for adjusting the angle of the metal blades of a propeller even while that propeller is turning 1,000 times a minute or more—the problem of noise-elimination is the subject of patient research.

As for humming wires, they are abolished. The aeroplane is becoming a smooth-wrought piece of metal work—an engineering job—in which external projections or criss-crossed wires simply do not exist.

So science moves remorselessly, taking no heed of ultimate horrors, towards a machine the most dreadful the world has ever seen. That machine is the aircraft which, flying immensely high, is not only invisible but also inaudible!

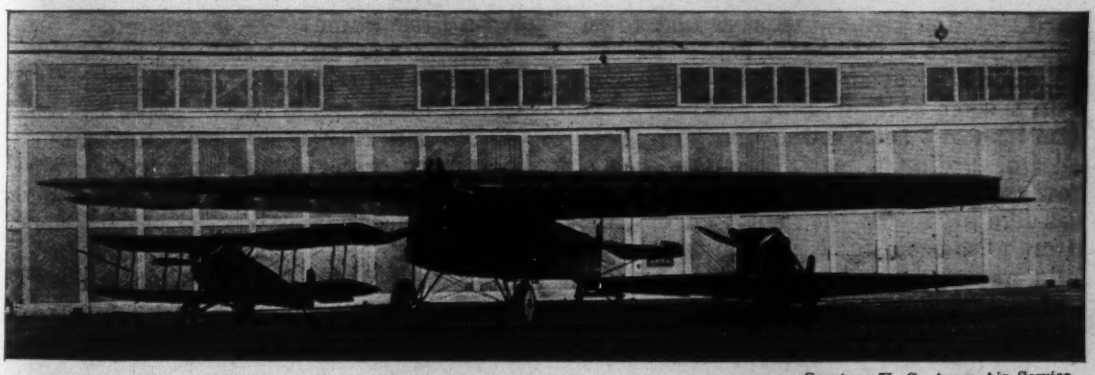
Nor is that all. There is a third branch of science which is even more terrible. It is the science which busies itself with gases and smokes which burn, strangle, poison, and roll across the earth in death-dealing waves. This science is moving on a line parallel with that of the silent and invisible aeroplane. It is the third terror, coming on the heels of the other two. Given a silent flying-machine; given, also, a silent flying-machine which is, to all intents and purposes, invisible, this other and third science of chemical war can, and probably will, add a crowning horror.

There are whispers already—and something more than whispers—of this ultimate terror. There is talk of a liquid chemical—the word comes from here and there forebodingly—which is so monstrously destructive, so hideously poisonous, that a few drops of it on the human skin is sufficient to occasion death!

Already the world trembles and moves uneasily in its bed at night. The silent air-raider! The air-raider that creeps, invisible, across the sky! And then, perhaps, this other and greater terror. Noiseless, unseen raiders, hundreds and perhaps thousands of them, which steal in a surprise attack above some great center of population. Suddenly, silently, terribly, a strange rain of heavy drops comes from the heavens above. And whoever that rain falls upon it kills!

Can humanity endure such a prospect?

Men, as Mr. Edison says, may consent to risk torture and death in order to inflict torture and death. But surely there must be a limit—surely there must come some breaking point. Surely there must be that, ultimately, which flesh and blood cannot and will not stand. And in the death which comes silently, invisibly—which falls in a rain on terror-stricken millions—is not that point reached?



Courtesy U. S. Army Air Service

*The Fokker, Army T-2, the pioneer trans-continental plane, which future generations will regard as we do the first automobiles and locomotives.*

# THE PERMANENT DEPUTY

*By* CHARLES WESLEY SANDERS

*Illustrated by Marshall Frantz*

THERE were only four men in the game—a poor number for draw poker. First there was Sam Rainey, with a thousand dollars in his pocket. Second there were the man named DeLana, the man named Styers, the man named Dorsey. These three are bunched as second because they were acquainted with each other and constituted a single force whereas Sam Rainey had met none of them till an hour before. Sam had an idea that he was in a social game, though chips cost ten dollars apiece and table stakes were being played.

Mr. DeLana had introduced himself to Sam in the lobby of the hotel and within five minutes had introduced Sam to the other two, who just chanced to drift up to where Sam and DeLana were standing.

"Gosh," said DeLana, a squat, swarthy man, looking like a Mexican but talking like an American, "but this is a slow town."

Sam Rainey had raised his blond eyebrows and had looked at DeLana with surprise showing in his dark-blue eyes.

"I thought it was a kind of a right smart sort of a town," said Sam. "Big buildin's, people on the move, lots of picture plays, pretty girls, shiny awtamobiles. Gosh," he echoed DeLana's word, "I don't know what a fast town would be like if this one is slow."

DeLana proved he had wit. He didn't scoff at Sam and intimate that Sam "hadn't been round any."

"Oh, I didn't really mean it was a slow town," he said. "I meant that it was like all towns—it gets kind of slow after you been in it for a while. A fella gets fed up on lookin' at crowds and awtamobiles an' even pretty girls—though I expect it makes a difference how old a man is. Me, I'm on the shady side of forty. I s'pose if I was still in my twenties like you, Mr. Rainey, I'd let my eyes linger on the girls longer than they seem willin' to do."

"Trouble is," upspoke Mr. Styers, "that when a man gets past forty the girls won't look at him."

Mr. Styers winked at Sam and Sam took the liberty of winking back, though DeLana was looking at him. DeLana looked as if he might get mad easy, but Sam had the excuse that Styers had started the kidding. Sam rather liked Styers. He was a big man, florid, fat, jovial, not far from forty himself. Dorsey was the youngest of the trio. Sam didn't like him. He was very dark, though not swarthy like DeLana, and he had given Sam a loose handclasp and had not looked Sam in the eye. Sam would have called him evasive, if that word had been in Sam's vocabulary.

But DeLana did not get mad at the gibe. He only smiled.

"Time was when the girls would look at me," he said. "Well, let's set down. No use makin' our legs reach the ground perpendicular when sittin' costs no more."

He took a seat but the others still stood. Dorsey looked about the lobby wearily.

"What d'ye say, DeLana, that we have a little game?" he suggested.

DeLana took off his soft hat and held it against his stomach. He pursed his lips and shook his head.

"Aw, I'd rather sit here and watch the pretty girls come and go, even though they won't look at me," he said. "If you don't look out, Dorsey, the gamblin' fever will get you. It's always that way. A man that ain't a poker player and never will be is always looking for a little game. Ain't that so, Mr. Rainey?"

*"Oh," she whispered, "aren't you going to help me? Don't you trust me? Or has something happened that has made you afraid?*

Now, Sam Rainey was a man of exceeding healthy appetite. He liked food as well as the next lean six-footer. But there had been times when he had lingered over a poker table and let food go cold. Next to forking a good horse, he liked to put his feet under a table decorated with stacks of various colored chips. It was only nine o'clock in the morning now. Why not a little game till noon, say?

"Well," he told DeLana, "I ain't much of a poker player, but I like a little game at that, a nice sociable game."

"This DeLana person is not only gettin' old, but he is gettin' fat," said Mr. Styers. "Just look at him this minute—all he wants to do is to sit an' do nothin'."

"Quit kiddin' me, Styers," said DeLana. "The last time we played—when was that, a month ago?—you near went to sleep over your cards. I might sit into a little game if you would give a guarantee to keep awake."

"You won a good pot off'n me while I was noddin'," Styers said, with another wink at Sam. "You ain't got no kick comin'."

"Oh, well," said DeLana, "anything to be obligin'. Come up to my room an' we'll woo this here goddess of fortune."

Styers linked his arm through Sam's and piloted him to the elevator. The two others followed.

"It'll be a good thing to have a little game to pass the time," said Styers. "We are in between times on our work here—dabblin' in oil, y'know—an' we're waitin' for things to come to a head. If them two boys are playin' poker with me I'll know they ain't around town gettin' into some devilment. I'm financin' the deal an' I got to keep 'em straight. They ain't none too well heeled and I'll see that they break about even. They don't know any more about playin' poker than a hen knows about navigation."

"That's me, too," said Sam.

"Well, it'll pass the time," Styers said.

In the room DeLana produced chips and cards. Styers and Dorsey set a table in the middle of the room and they grouped themselves about it.

"You bank, Styers," said DeLana.

"Bank yourself," said Styers. "Gosh, but you're gettin' lazier an' lazier. Ever see anything like him, Mr. Rainey? Wants me to do all the work."

"Oh, all right," DeLana said, and he stacked the chips in neat piles. Styers and Dorsey drew respectable rolls of bills from their pockets. Each peeled two fifties and tossed them in DeLana's general direction. DeLana shoved twin stacks to them.

This was a shock to Sam Rainey. He had never played above a quarter limit in his life. A hundred dollars a throw for a stack was going some. But he was in it; one trouble he had was that he didn't know when to back out. He produced his own roll and peeled a hundred. None of the men looked at the roll. They didn't need to. Styers had seen it that morning when Sam had paid his breakfast bill. Sam had thought he had change in another pocket but found he hadn't enough. So out came the roll. Sam hadn't been able to get out of the lobby before Mr. Styers had communicated with Mr. DeLana and Mr. Dorsey, and Mr. DeLana was at Sam's side, introducing himself, within two minutes.

Well, they seemed like a good-natured sort of bunch. Sam decided he would play his cards close and he was sure he could pretty nearly break even. His luck had always stood up for him as well as for the next man and he was a fair judge of hands and how to play them. So he tossed a hard-earned hundred to Mr. DeLana.

"Cut for deal?" DeLana asked.

"Oh, deal 'em up," said the jovial Mr. Styers.

There was half an hour of play, during which nothing much happened. Sam was out of the pot oftener than he was in it. The three other men missed no pots. Mr. Styers constituted himself critic of the play of the other two.

"You poor fish," said he to DeLana, "didn't you see me pass the break and draw one card? What'd you think?" And again to Dorsey: "Bone, didn't you see me break it and draw two. Where do you get the idea that aces up can beat three lovely deuces? Gosh, such poker playin'! Say, also, what's the idea in keepin' Mr. Rainey out of the game? Can't you deal him a hand this time, Dorsey? He hasn't had a look-in so far."

"Oh, don't talk so much," Dorsey said, with the first show of ill nature. "If I knew how to do it I'd deal myself a hand. I'm in this game seventy-five bones as it is."

"You better have some more chips," DeLana said, and shoved over a stack. "You might want to bet this time."

"I wouldn't go in against this Styers person if I had a royal," Dorsey stated. "You can't beat him with a club with knots on it."

Before he dealt the cards, however, he paid for his second stack. As it happened, Sam Rainey had no use for ill-natured men. He conceived a sudden dislike for Dorsey. Here was Styers as good-natured as could be and DeLana acting like a gentleman, though he looked like a Mex. Where'd Dorsey get that stuff o' his? Sam had a notion he would take him over the jumps—which, as "seamen learn and landsmen know," is a fatal feeling in a poker game.

Sam skinned down his cards, holding them close under his deep-blue eyes. All he could see was three aces, one king, and a deuce.

"Pass," he said, rapping the table lightly with his lean knuckles.

"Well, if you don't get the dog-gonedest hands," said Styers. "I'm forced to shove in a red boy."

"Stick around," said DeLana.

Dorsey was examining his cards. A frown lay between his eyes. He seemed undecided. Styers laid a big hand alongside his mouth and stage-whispered to DeLana:

"Who's the sleepy-head now?"

"Oh, cut it out," Dorsey said. "You've got me so mixed up now I don't know what to do with this hand. I'll quit unless you leave me alone, Styers."

"I beg your pardon, ol' boy," said Styers, suddenly grave. "I didn't mean to rile you. I'm a clam from now on."

"Well, I'm goin' to raise it," Dorsey said. "I expect you'll clean me, Styers, but seems to me the hand is worth it."

He pushed five reds to the center of the table. Sam took a peek. It seemed to him that this was the time to put the cleaner on. If Styers had raised he would merely have stayed. Dorsey, with his whine, was fair plucking. Sam shoved his stack, totaling ninety dollars, to the center of the table.

Dorsey emitted a grunt of disgust and slammed his cards on the table.

"Why didn't you break it?" he demanded. "You must have breakers."

"Tut, tut, Dorsey," Styers cautioned. "The gentleman didn't have to break lessen he wanted to. It ain't right to make no comments on another gentleman's hand, anyhow. I'm droppin' out."

"Me too," said DeLana.

"Well, you guys won't get the pot anyway," Dorsey said, with some satisfaction in his tone. "How many, brother?"

All Sam's checks were in the center of the table. Neither he nor Dorsey could bet after the draw. There was no reason for disguising his hand.

"Two to me," he said.

He picked up a five and a six. Dorsey drew one card. He shuffled the five in his hands for a minute before he skinned them down.

"I know you got me beat," he complained. "You had threes all the way. I on'y had jacks up." Suddenly, as he peeked at the corners of his cards, he plucked out a card and tossed it, face up, on the table. "The third jack!" he cried.

"Let's see the rest of it," said Sam cooly.

Dorsey showed two more jacks and a pair to make the full. He gazed triumphantly at Sam.

"Beats me," said Sam laconically.

It was his own deal. He gathered up the cards.

"Better get somethin' in front of you," Dorsey insinuated.

Sam flushed; he couldn't help it. Out came his roll.

"Gimme two stacks," he said. "I may need 'em on my own deal."

"That's the stuff," said DeLana. "Make him like it on your own deal."

Sam had not had much experience of life or poker games, but he was not entirely an innocent. Mebbe—just mebbe—Dorsey's deal hadn't been all that a gent might wish. He had the cards in his own hands now, however. This deal would be straight. It was straight and it was good. Sitting in a golden seat, Sam picked up three kings. On the draw, after Styers, under the gun, had broken the pot, Sam helped himself to a pair of fours. Styers bet a red. The

other two stayed. Sam liked the feel of the cards. It was his own deal. DeLana and Styers had taken three apiece. Dorsey had taken two.

Sam had a notion that he had Dorsey beaten before the draw, even if Dorsey had a set of threes. Dorsey would have to make fours if he topped Sam's hand, unless, of course, he had started off with three aces. Sam looked at Dorsey's stack. Then he pushed a full stack and part of another to the center of the table. Styers had a thoughtful moment and dropped out. DeLana stayed for Sam's stack. He and Sam had to skin down one apiece when Dorsey came in. Dorsey slammed four nines on the table.

Sam said not a word. He had dealt the cards. Dorsey's luck had held up. Also in Sam's mind the deal was evidence that Dorsey had not dealt crookedly. Lady Luck had merely sat beside him for two consecutive hands.

Sam considered. He didn't want to lose the three hundred. He had played good poker, he believed. Luck wouldn't stay with Dorsey straight through.

"I'll take a coupla hundred myself," said DeLana. "I'm nearly cleaned. I'm goin' after this Dorsey man."

"Gimme two hundred," said Sam, and now his roll held half of what it originally held.

"Live in town, Mr. Rainey?" Styers asked, as he dealt.

"Nope; just got in night before last. From the Panhandle."

"Cattle country?"

"Yeh; been workin' out there for four years."

"Thought you'd take a flier in town, eh?" Styers smiled.

"I may come down with a bump," Sam grinned.

"Oh, I guess not," said Styers in his whole-hearted way. "Things will switch back and forth. I reckon we'll be prett' nigh even when we get ready to eat."

There was little play for four hands. Styers' deal came round again. He yawned sleepily and shuffled the cards clumsily.

"If you're goin' to sleep, I'll quit," said Dorsey.

Styers jerked himself up in his chair and laughed. He winked at Sam.

"Cut 'em, Mr. Rainey," he said.

Sam cut 'em. There was a clatter to his right. He looked at Dorsey. Dorsey had tumbled over a stack of checks. Styers picked up the cut deck and restored the cards to the position they had had before Sam had cut them. He was slowly dealing when Sam looked back at him. Sam bet his two hundred on four tens that trip and went up against four queens in DeLana's hand. He bought two hundred dollars worth again. There was no use in leaving half his roll here.

He didn't leave half of it. He left all of it. At high noon he spun a red chip toward DeLana.

"Cash that for me," he said.

Amid a profound silence DeLana handed him a ten-dollar bill. Sam rose.

"A nice little game, gents," he said. "Good day."

He was certain he had been cheated, but he did not know enough about crooked handling of cards to make an accusation. Anyhow, he hated a whiner. That was why he had disliked Dorsey and had plunged against him time after time.

"I'm right sorry to see the game end like this, Mr. Rainey," Styers said smoothly. "Usually we break about even."

Sam opened the door.

"Any time you want another little game, telegraph, telephone, or write us anywhere and we'll come," said Dorsey.

Sam wheeled about. His eyes flashed over the group. He saw that Styers was smiling smugly. In that instant he wondered why he had liked Styers. The man was not good-natured; he was merely oily.

Sam's hand dropped to his hip, but there was no gun there. His precious weapon was in his suitcase in his room.

"Well, well," said Dorsey, "lookit him make a move toward his gun."

Sam flung the door open, passed into the hall, slammed the door behind him. Dorsey's laugh floated over the transom.

Unused to the ways of hotels, Sam had slipped his key into his pocket instead of leaving it at the desk. His room was on the floor above this. He went slowly up the stairs and gained the room. He would have to leave the hotel. He didn't know how much his room was costing. He had been too timid to ask the price. He had reckoned

he could occupy it for ten days, pay his other expenses and have something left out of his thousand.

He couldn't remain any longer on a lonely ten-dollar bill, however. He packed his suitcase and went down to the desk.

"I'm leavin'," he said. "What's my bill?"

*He drew a deep breath and laid a hand over hers. "When I forget you, I'll be dead."*

"Pay the cashier," said the haughty clerk.

Sam burned him with a look and went around to the barred window back of which a girl was working above a big book.

"My bill," said Sam.

"Name?"

"Sam Rainey."

She had a look-see.

"Ten dollars, Mr. Rainey," she said.

Sam looked at her blankly. He looked so long that she raised her eyes. Sam grinned.

"How much stock do I own in this joint now?" he asked, as he placed his lonely ten on the ledge of the little window.

"We'll let you know on dividend day," she said.

Sam took up his new imitation-leather suitcase and went away from there. He walked three blocks before he considered what he was going to do. He wanted to put that hotel behind him. At the end of the three blocks he wanted to get rid of the suitcase. Lugging luggage was out of his line. Fishing through his pockets, he found fifteen cents. He went down to the railroad station and checked the suitcase. Coming out of the station, he looked around for a while. Suddenly he was conscious that his trusty stomach had set off the alarm-clock. Panic seized Sam Rainey.

"Great guns," he told himself, "I'm

hungry and there's no place I can eat."

The ending of the world would not have been more astounding. Sam had never known what it was to want for food. Back home in the Panhandle there was always food and still more food. He felt suddenly weak. His face a little white, he went back into the waiting-room and sat down. Should he telegraph home for money? Gosh, no! The boys' parting bet, only verbal of course, was that he would lose his wad before he had been in the city forty-eight hours. True and dire prophecy! It kinda looked, said Sam Rainey to himself, as if he would have to hunt up some kind of menial job to get carfare back home. He wondered what nice strong six-footers did in a city to get together a stake.

And then a young lady came up to the bench noiselessly and sat down beside him.

## CHAPTER II

Samuel did not at first know that it was a young lady who had sat down beside him. His brain was not working overly well. The faint rustle of a skirt did not connect itself in his brain with femininity for perhaps a full minute. When it did, he stole a look.

In the corner of his eye came a picture of a lady dressed all in blue. She wore a heavy veil over her face, but her sunshiny hair disclosed itself between hat and veil. Sam was sure she was pretty, but since he had been taken over the jumps once, he was not sure that the proximity of a veiled lady was a good omen. The bench was long, no one else occupied it.

It was between trains at the station and there were only two other persons in the room. One, a man, was dozing; the other, a woman, was reading a magazine. Sam didn't see any reason why a veiled lady should come and sit so close to him. He had an impulse to slide himself along the bench away from her. Before he could obey the impulse the veiled lady spoke. Her voice was so low that Sam found himself inclining his left ear to catch her words.

"Don't look at me," she said. "Don't say anything. Let me do the talking. If any one looks our way, pretend we are not engaged in conversation."

Sam looked straight ahead. Listening to that low voice was not at all difficult. Sam'd bet—no, by gosh, he'd never bet again—but he had a notion that the owner of that voice was prettier'n all get out.

"Did you notice me at the hotel?"

Sam's mind flew back down along the hours. He recalled girls he had noticed in the hotel, so far as he could do so. In his memory he ran over the girls in the cafeteria where he had eaten, the girls who had come and gone in the lobby, the girls he had seen entering and leaving the hotel. He could not place this girl in blue with the sunshiny hair. So he shook his head.

"That's good," the girl said. "If you didn't notice me, no one will suspect that we have met. Are you a good and honest man?"

Sam turned perplexed eyes on her.

"Don't look at me," she entreated.

Sam set his eyes front. You could have knocked him off the seat with the well-known feather just then.

"Why, ma'am," he whispered, "I got a pretty good reputation where I come from."

"Where are you from?"

"The cattle country. Over near the New Mexico line."

"How long have you been in town?"

"Why, I got in here at ten o'clock night before last. The train was late."

"You arrived at this station?"

"Why, yes, ma'am."

"How did you go to the hotel? In a cab?"

"No'm. I walked. I wasn't lookin' for that particular hotel. I was just lookin' for any place to stay. I seen all the lights was up thataway"—with a wave of his hand in the direction from which he had come—"and I had an idea if I turned away from them lights I would find a place to stay where it wouldn't be so noisy."

"Oh," said the girl and she clapped a hand above her heart causing Sam to turn and stare again, and bringing from her a second order not to look at her. "And how far did you go away from town?" she asked, when Sam was again looking straight ahead.

"Why, I reckon I walked seven-eight blocks," Sam said.

"You came to the other railroad?"

"Yes'm, that's where I stopped."

She put a hand on Sam's arm and her fingers bit into his flesh. Sam didn't mind that; in fact he rather liked it. It was sort of thrillin', or would be if she proved to be as pretty as he suspected she was.

"Then," she said, "You walked up the railroad to your right for about a third of a mile. You thought you would come to another street and follow it back to town. You—you had an experience there at the railroad track that you will tell about later. Am I right?"

"Gosh," said Sam Rainey to himself, "I wonder if this girl is connected up with them guys that fleeced me. I wonder if she is tryin' to get another wad from me. I wish she could!"

"Have you any money?" the girl asked, as if she read his thoughts.

Sam emitted a hollow laugh. Whee, but cities were great places. A man couldn't come to town to have a little fun without bein' held up even when he was cleaned out. This girl had seemed to be a nice girl—she had such a pleasant voice—but so had Styers seemed to be a good scout. Sam steeled himself. He turned to look at the girl and would not look away, though she shrank from him and entreated him to do so.

"What's the game?" he asked a little roughly. "What difference does it make whether I have money or not?"

"All the difference in the world," she said. "I don't think you have any. I saw you come out of the hotel and you looked rather bewildered."

"How're Styers, DeLana, an' Dorsey gettin' along?" Sam shot out, and watched her closely for a start of surprise.

But she did not start; she only seemed to be looking blank. Then her eyes swept the waiting-room. The man still dozed; the woman read. The girl lifted her veil. Sam Rainey stared then—and thought of roses blooming. This girl, he told himself, had 'em all faded. He wondered briefly how he had thought any of the other girls he had seen were pretty. Gosh, this was a queen!

"I don't know any of those persons," she said. "Will you tell me whether you have any money?"

"I have not," Sam stated. "The three gents I have just enumerated cleaned me out. We was playin' poker. Leastways *they* was playin' poker; I was just sittin' in. It took my last ten dollar bill to pay for my room."

"What are you going to do now?"

"Get me a job and rustle some coin, I reckon. Say, ma'am, what's my financial circumstances got to do with our pleasant little visit? How did you come to set yourself down beside me and dig into my affairs? Me not meanin' no offense by puttin' these questions, ma'am."

"How would you like to go back to that hotel and remain there for a week or ten days?" the girl asked.

"How would I like to be settin' down to a big beef stew?" Sam scoffed.

"You haven't even enough money to buy food?" she queried.

"I got a nickel," Sam answered. "What that would buy I wouldn't call food exactly. I was considerin' a sack of peanuts."

"If you had money would you return to the hotel?"

"I reckon I would," Sam said, "I would like to show them gents that I wasn't cleaned complete. I would like to keep an eye on them besides. But I ain't goin' back to no hotel. I reckon I'll sleep out to-night."

"Do you stick to your partners?" she asked.

"Me?" he said, in surpise. "Well, if Shorty Donaldson was here, he could tell you. He's my side-kicker. He warned me I would be trimmed in this gent's town."

"You are my partner from now on," the strange girl declared. "I shall expect you to stick with me till I tell you you are free. Will you do it?"

Sam scanned the lovely face. He found no guile in it. Unversed though he was in the ways of women, he could not bring himself to believe that this girl was anything but sweet.

"Why, lady," he said seriously, "if you got a little job of work you want done an' you have picked me to do the job, why, I don't reckon I would aim to throw you down. You got to remember, though, that none of all this is as plain to me as it seems to be to you. Just what is the game, anyway?"

"You will go to the hotel and register again and get a room," she said. "You will remain at the hotel till you hear from me, either in person or by messenger. You will be entirely free for a

week. At the end of the week do not leave the hotel. Be either in your room or in the restaurant or the lobby. You will get a call on the telephone or be called on by some one. Then you will be told what is expected of you."

"But," said Sam, "I told you I was done busted."

Again her brown eyes swept the waiting-room. They came back to Sam's face.

"Will you do just what I tell you to do?" she asked.

"Mebbe that would be a large order."

"No; you won't have to stir from your seat. I am going to hand you an envelope. Put it in your pocket. When I have gone, open it. Then go to the hotel and do just what I have told you to do. Will you do it—or have I made a mistake? Perhaps you are afraid."

The spirit of youth and the spirit of high adventure struck hands on that and laughed right merrily.

"You ain't really got any notion in that pretty head of yours that I'm afraid," said Sam Rainey, and his eyes gleamed.

She produced an envelope from a handbag she carried. Sam took it and dropped it into his coat pocket. The girl turned squarely around toward him.

"Now look at me," she said. "Look at me well so that you will remember me next time we meet."

Sam gazed into the lovely face. The picture of it was burned into his brain. He drew a deep, slow breath. Before she could move, he laid a hand over one of her's.

"When I forget you, I'll be dead," he declared.

The girl's color ran up into her face, a flood of rose-red suddenly released. She, too, took a swift breath. She shut her eyes tightly for a moment. Without opening them, she drew down her veil.

"You won't attempt to follow me?" she asked.

"No, ma'am, I will be waitin' to hear from you or see you again," he replied.

She rose, had ten unsteady seconds. Then she walked swiftly to the door and disappeared through it. Sam stared at the door like a man in a dream. He would not have been surprised to wake up and find himself in his bunk.

Then he remembered that he had promised to return to the hotel. The envelope must contain the wherewithal. He took it from his pocket and opened it. From it he drew out a tightly pressed sheaf of bills. He thumbed them over. They were all twenties and there were twenty-five of them. Five hundred dollars! And a bit ago Sam Rainey had not had the price of a meal.

He had sense enough to get the money into his pocket out of sight. Then he rose and went into the street.

"I will eat," he declared solemnly, out of the whirl of his thoughts.

## CHAPTER III

Having eaten to repletion, Rainey returned to the hotel and re-engaged the room he had lately given up. He had retrieved his suitcase from the station check room and he followed the boy up in the elevator to the hotel room.

A shave, clean shirt and collar, the brushing of stubborn hair, and Sam Rainey felt sort of fit again. The feel of the four hundred and some odd dollars in his pants pocket was rather comforting, even though his conscience stirred a little restlessly when he thought of how he had come by the money. He told his conscience that the girl would be around at the end of the week to make him earn the money, however. He hoped the difficulty of the job she would want done would be commensurate to the amount of money she had staked him to.

He went out into the corridor, jangling his key against the stiff leather tag to which it was attached. As he approached the elevator shaft he saw a man standing with his back to him. Sam recognized the man as Styers. Styers, hearing the noise of the key, turned around. He stared wide-eyed at Sam, the mask of his suavity dropped for the moment. But he quickly recovered himself and smiled the smile which had deceived Sam into thinking he was a good sport.

"Why, Mr. Rainey," said Styers, "I didn't know you were back."

"How did you know I had left?" Sam asked coolly.

"Why—er—the clerk told me."

Sam had approached Styers and was standing close to him. He now stared insolently into Styers' eyes.

"I must be quite a fella," Sam said.

*His eyes took in Sam's figure huddled under the eaves. A whisper of fear escaped his lips.*

"I was so important in the mind of that clerk that the first thing he done was to tell you that Mr. Samuel Rainey had give up his room and had blowed, much to the regret of the clerk, and loss to the hotel."

"Why—er—no, of course not," Styers returned genially. "I went down to the lobby a while after our little game broke up and asked if you had come down. The clerk said you had just checked out. I was thinking I would invite you to lunch."

Before Sam could retort to this, the elevator arrived and they stepped into it and were borne to the ground floor. Styers stepped out and waited. Sam followed him.

"Got anything on for this afternoon, Mr. Rainey?" he asked.

"I got something on for this minute," Sam said. "I want to talk to you."

"Certainly," said Styers, and led the way to two chairs.

"What's your business, mister?" Sam asked, as they sat down.

Styers looked at him out of the corner of his eye. His blood wove its way into the fatty tissues of his face.

"I don't think I like your tone, Mr. Rainey," he said.

"I don't want you to," Sam said coldly. "I ain't beatin' about the bush none, neither. I got a little notion that that game you and me and them two other guys was in was crooked, Styers. How do you like that for talk?"

"I don't like it," Styers said in a low voice. "It is dangerous talk, Mr. Rainey. Accusing a business man of being a crook is running it pretty strong."

"Business man?" Sam repeated. "What business you in, fella?"

"Why, I don't know that that's any of your business," Styers retorted.

"Me," said Sam, "I was workin' over in the cattle country near the New Mexico line. I been roamin' that there Panhandle since I was a kid. I got a thousand dollars together. I thought the time had come for me to see a little of the sights, me never havin' been outside o' that same Panhandle country. So I takes my thousand an' comes to this gent's town. I gets fleeced of the thousand right off the reel. I wouldn't be kickin' none if the coin had gone in a

good cause or if it had been taken from me in a square game by decent folks. Now you can see the business I been in. I've give you a fair an' comprehensive sketch of my young life. I reckon you can gather also what my business from now on is to be."

"I don't get that last," Styers confessed.

"Gimme a look in the eye if you got one handy," Sam said.

Something in the hard young voice made Styers start. He turned around in his chair and stared at Sam. Sam's face looked older. Styers had taken him for an innocent of the range, but this was not the face of an innocent. It was the face of a determined man.

"My business from now on is to get back my thousand dollars," Sam stated steadily. "I worked hard for that money. I put it in the bank a little at a time. I was a blamed fool for bringin' the whole wad with me, but I had a hankerin' to see how it would feel to have a thousand on me at one an' the same time. I don't aim to let that hard-earned money line the pockets of three crooks like you and your pardners. What's your business, Mr. Styers?"

"I'll tell you my business in a minute," Styers said thoughtfully. "First, since the bars are down and we are so cussed confidential each with the other, may I ask you a question?"

"I ain't stopping you from askin' nothin'," Sam said.

"That thousand dollars was all the money you had in the world?"

"I had a nickel and a dime after I paid my hotel bill after the game," Sam answered.

"How is it you are back at the hotel?" Styers asked. "Your story seems to have a hole in it. You haven't had time to wire for money. You say you are a stranger in town."

"I am a stranger," Sam said. "But a few minutes after I left here I was talkin' to a friend of mine. Influential around here that person is, too. You can see how I was staked."

He drew out his new roll and held it in the palm of his hand. Styers' eyes gleamed and then the gleam faded and was replaced by a look which Sam thought was anxious.

"You sure you're not running a bluff, Mr. Rainey?" Styers asked.

"If you think I am, mebbe you have a guess on what kind of a bluff it is," Sam retorted.

"Well, you might be an officer of the law," Styers said.

Sam plucked that out of the air and held it before his mind's eye. It looked usable. If Styers thought he was an officer, he might get his money back the more easily. He also believed that denial would be more convincing than truth.

"I ain't an officer," he said. "Gettin' back to number one, what's *your* business, fella? Y' know what they say about a fair exchange."

Styers drew a bill-fold from his pocket. From this he extracted a card which he handled to Sam. It imparted to Sam that Mr. Styers was a traveling representative of a Northern company which handled mill, mine and oil-well supplies. Well, that kind of looked as if Styers had a business.

"That ain't so bad," Sam said. "What's the business of them two friends of yours?"

"You'll have to ask them," Styers answered.

"I aim to. Where are they now?"

"Gone uptown."

"When they come back tell 'em I want to see 'em." Sam ordered. "I'm makin' a formal demand on you for the return of my thousand, Mr. Styers."

"I think you stand a fat chance of getting it," Styers said acidly. "You'll remember that Dorsey got more of your money than DeLana or I did. If you can squeeze a dollar out of Dorsey once he gets his hands on it, you will do well. I'll tell you what I'll do, however. You come to my room at four o'clock and I'll have Dorsey and DeLana there. You can play your string out with them."

"How much did you win in the game?" Sam asked.

"A coupla hundred mebbe."

"Nobody lost but me," Sam said. "Hand over the coupla hundred."

Styers grinned into his face.

"You can't stage a hold-up in the lobby of a hotel, Rainey," he said. "Mebbe that goes in your country, but it don't go here." He rose. "My room is 306 on the same floor you're on. Come there at four o'clock and you can meet DeLana and Dorsey."

"I'll be there, fella," Sam said.

Styers went over to the elevator and entered it. For a while Sam sat looking about the lobby. Then he went out to the street. He had been holding Styers' card in his hand and he now put it into his pocket.

Sam Rainey was no sleuth, but he had good horse-sense. All his life he had spent the major part of his waking hours alone and he had come to be the possessor of a balanced mind. Given time, he could think things out with a fair degree of success. Altogether he had done a heap of thinking in his lifetime on one subject and another. Now he stood in the hotel entrance and considered Styers from every angle he could think of. At last it came to him that if Styers was the traveling man he proclaimed himself to be, he came frequently to this hostelry. Sam wanted to know about that immediately. He rolled a cigarette under the contemptuous eyes of the negro doorman and then his squinting eyes took in the street in front of him.

"Mebbe he'd know," he told himself at last.

"He" was the driver of a taxi standing at the curb. That driver had eyed Sam expectantly when Sam had come outside, but since Sam didn't look promising he was now lolling in his seat, eyes front. Sam strode up to the car.

"Yes, sir," said the driver and hopped down and opened the door. "Where to?" he asked when Sam had stepped inside and he had resumed his seat.

"Roll me out in the country for a few miles," Sam directed.

They left the city behind and headed up toward hills which loomed green and black in the distance. When they came to a particularly lonely spot, Sam leaned forward.

"This'll be far enough," he said. "I want to talk to you."

The driver brought the car to a sudden stop and turned around, fright in his eyes.

"Don't be scared," Sam said in his lowest, softest tone and with a smile in his eyes. "I ain't holdin' you up. I ain't one of these here bandits that's been roamin' these parts. Son, would a ten dollar bill mean anything in your young life?"

"Depends on what it was for," the driver returned.

"Just a little information."

"If I got ten dollars' worth of information on me, you can have it for ten dollars," the driver said.

"Do you know a fair fat man, a swarthy man, lookin' like a Mex and a thin dark man, stoppin' at that hotel back there?" Sam asked.

"I don't know them last two. I know Mr. Styers, if that's who you mean. He's been comin' to the hotel every two months for four years and I reckon before that. I been on that stand for four years. Styers usually stays at the hotel about five days on each trip. He's been here for two weeks this time."

"Ever drive him around any?"

"Lots of times. Took him to see his customers in town and in the villages roundabout."

"Been takin' him to his customers while he's been here this time?"

The driver hesitated. Sam had a notion that he had asked an important question.

"Ten dollars, y' know," Sam said, producing his roll.

"Styers ain't called on no customers this trip that I know of," the driver answered.

Sam peeled off a ten-dollar bill and returned the balance of the money to his pocket. The driver held out an expectant hand. Sam crumpled the bill in his own palm.

"Son," he drawled, "that last answer would sound mighty good, I reckon, if you would complete it. This bill is kind of burnin' my hand. I'll have to hand it over to you or put it back in my pocket if you don't put a tail to the kite of that last answer."

"I drove them three men out in the country night before last," the driver said and he took the bill which Sam extended to him.

"Whereabouts in the country?" Sam asked.

"Over beyond here about five miles. There's a new ragtown over there. Oil come in about six months ago and the town, if you can call it that, sprung up. It's wild."

"Them fellas stop in the ragtown?"

"No, they went through it to a house about half a mile away. They were in

the house about half an hour. Then I brought them back to town."

"Seem excited?"

"Stranger," said the driver, "I can't talk no more. I've give you the facts. You can't expect me to tell you how anythin' *seemed*. When a man has to go drivin' around this country, especially at night, he is a wise guy if he keeps his mouth shut."

"I was talkin' to Styers a while back in the hotel," Sam said. "He asked me was I an officer. How strong is that habit of yours of keepin' your mouth shut, son?"

"I just happened to need that ten," the driver said. "Tips ain't been none too good lately."

"I'll be around here for ten days or more," Sam said. "I might take a ride now and then. I ain't no tightwad. I'm goin' to clean up a thousand dollars at four o'clock this afternoon."

"I'm always out in front of the hotel," the driver said. "I don't suppose you will mention this little talk we've had."

"Not any. When we get back to town you let me out several blocks from the hotel."

The driver followed this instruction. Sam hunted up the Western Union office and with Styers' card in his hand wrote a telegram. It was directed to the company in the North which Styers represented.

"I don't know why I'm so int'rested in them guys," he told himself, as he walked along toward the hotel, "lessen it's because I am ridin' on the high tide of adventure."

At the hotel he went to his room. Taking off his coat, he opened his suitcase and took therefrom one of his choicest possessions. Then he sat down before the open window, his eyes on a distant clock. When the hands marked two minutes to four, he resumed his coat, let himself into the hall, found room 306 and knocked loudly on the door.

Styers opened the door. He bowed, grinning. Beyond him Sam could see DeLana and Dorsey.

"Step right in, Mr. Rainey," Styers said.

Sam stepped right in.

Styers closed the door. Sam stood back against it.

## CHAPTER IV

"Have a seat, Mr. Rainey," said Styers.

"The view is always better standin' up," Sam said.

His eyes went from DeLana to Dorsey and then briefly to Styers. DeLana looked morose, Dorsey grim; Styers attempted a smile, but it had rather a sickly hue.

"Gents," said Sam quickly, "are we goin' to have trouble?"

"If you are lookin' for trouble, you have come to the right place," Dorsey declared.

"Now, now—" Styers began, but Dorsey cut him short.

"Aw, shut up! Do you think I'm going to let this guy come here an' run a bluff on me? You just remember the yellow streak you got, Styers, an' keep your mouth shut. When action is due, you take a back seat. I aim to show this gent a little action, if that's what he's looking for."

A table was between Sam and Dorsey. It partly obscured Dorsey's body. His hands were below its top and, looking beneath it, Sam could not see the hands. What was in them Sam could only guess, but he thought his guess was not far from correct.

"You are ready to welcome me with that gun you got in your hands, are you, Dorsey?" Sam asked, and there was a chill in his tone.

Also there was on his young face that older look which had startled Styers a while ago. The deep blue eyes blackened and suddenly became more brilliant. Sam Rainey bent a little forward from the hips.

"Who says I have a gun?" Dorsey asked.

"I do," Sam returned. "And if you are aimin' to use it, you will never have a better chance. Just lemme see you crook that right elbow a little more, as if you were bringin' that hand above the table. I'd certainly like to see that very int'restin' little movement, Mr. Dorsey."

"Gunman, are you?" Dorsey sneered.

"Me?" said Sam. "Well, the time I didn't have a gun in my hand is all a blank to me in the dim, long past. I think I had a six gun for a plaything

(*Continued on page 135*)

FORT WORTH, TEXAS, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1921.
A TEXAN'S 4 MONTHS MAN HUNT
Norfleet and Sole Who Helped Trail Furey
Furey's Return, He Was Injured Leaping From Fast Moving Train Trying To Escape
Joe Furey, Alleged Master Mind In Gigantic Swindle
Chas. Gerber Convicted, Awaits Appeal
E. O. Ward, Who Killed Self After Conviction
San Francisco
Denver
Kansas City
Oklahoma City
Hale Center, Norfleet's Home
New Orleans
Tampa
District Attorney Jesse M. Brown, Who Directed The Chase
BY FRANK G. EVANS

*A newspaper display which featured the principals of Norfleet's chase and a map of the transcontinental pursuit.*

# NORFLEET—MAN-HUNTER

*The Trail of Terror and Narrowly-escaped Death that Led to the Capture of a Notorious Bunco Man*

*By* MAX BENTLEY

A WEEK after his experience at Daytona, Frank Norfleet almost caught Joe Furey twice. At Miami he missed the "Master Mind" by a day, after locating his retreat—a bungalow inconspicuously set down in the piney woods—and at Key West was so close behind his quarry that Furey eluded capture only by leaping into a launch and putting out to sea. Frantic with chagrin, Norfleet chartered a hydroplane, combed the Florida keys and even touched at Havana, but Furey was

Editor's Note: *In* McCLURE'S MAGAZINE *for June it was told how a stockman of Texas was swindled out of $45,000 and plunged $95,000 in debt by a gang of confidence men. The victim of this swindle gave four years of his life to tracking his men down. How he got every one of them is a true story more thrilling and daring than the wildest of detective yarns. In this chapter Norfleet tells how he got the "Master Mind," Joe Furey.*

"long gone from there." The miss was better than a mile—Furey hailed a ship and ultimately landed in Liverpool; it delayed the Texan's final triumph for many months.

"That night," says Norfleet in his book, "I received a wire from my son, Pete, telling me I was needed at home to adjust some business matters. I left for Texas, got things in shape at the farm and departed for San Antonio to trail a fur coat. It was a job I had overlooked on my earlier visit there, a week after my swindle, before I was wise in

the game of hunting down criminals."

On the earlier visit, Norfleet had tracked his men to San Antonio and lost them. He had learned there that Furey had purchased a fur coat from a female shoplifter and hurriedly decamped without paying for it. She had "squealed" but was unable to throw light on the criminal's whereabouts.

Norfleet was baffled:

"Florida had failed me. Every clue connected with the affair had been cleared except one, and that was the coat. It had seemed small when I first picked it up, and I had dismissed it without even a casual look; but now that all other leads had come to an end I grasped at this as a drowning man grasps at a straw. I turned my attention to trailing a fur coat instead of a live man. I figured that Furey must have shipped it—certainly he would not have carried it along with him—and California was the answer, since Ward and Gerber had gone directly from San Antonio to San Bernadino. So I went to San Antonio to examine the express company and parcel post records."

That examination turned up a hot lead. Norfleet found a receipt for a package which had been shipped by parcel post during the time of Furey's known stay in San Antonio to an apartment number in San Francisco. It was addressed to no one person, it bore the name of no sender, it did not have a return address, and it was not insured. From its weight it might have been a fur coat.

Norfleet left that night for San Francisco. He dropped off the train at San Bernadino to inspect the hotel registers. By now he had in his notebook a half-dozen of Furey's *aliases,* and among them the name Peck.

"Life with me was just one search after another," he says. "I found that a 'Mr. Peck' had occupied a room in one of the San Bernadino hotels. What was more important, I found a phone call to a Los Angeles number charged to that room during the time of his occupancy. I had him two ways now.

"I hurried to Los Angeles. A fur coat—and a phone call—were the objects of my search. I registered at the Alhambra Hotel. The first thing I did was to pick up the telephone and call that number.

"'Hello,' said a pleasant feminine voice in my ear. My heart thudded against my ribs.

"'Who is this speaking?' I asked.

"'This is Mrs. Furey. Whom did you wish to speak to?'

"'Pardon!' I exclaimed as I hung up the receiver. 'I believe I have the wrong number.' My jubilance knew no bounds.

"'At last! At last! Thank God, at last!' I cried. I do not think if I live to be one hundred years old I will ever again feel the same thrill of triumph. My wife and I had often discussed the fact that some of these men must have families. We used to remark that if only we knew where they kept their households the trail could be picked up there."

Norfleet ran down Furey's telephone. It led to a mansion in Glendale, a Los Angeles suburb. Dawn was breaking when the Texan took up his post in a parkway opposite and gazed longingly at the imposing pile of masonry Furey had built.

"It was still early morning. The faint, sweet haze that hung over the little village was beginning to lift. The purple hills in the distance were drawing it toward them. I drank deep of that soft liquid air which hovers over cities, big and small, just before they wake.

"I gazed at the upstairs windows. They were open. The shades were drawn halfway, and, back and forth in the sway of the gently-moving air, delicate meshed curtains of white swam in and out, brushing their ruffled edges across the sill. Everything about the house spoke of money. Some way I knew this was to be a future battle field. Would I, like Samson, place my hands on the stone pillars and bring this place down on their heads, as well as my own? I made up my mind to watch the house until something developed, and for two days I kept it constantly under watch."

On the third day something developed. Shadowing Furey's house finally led to a meeting with the swindler's little son and a playful game of baseball. The lad innocently told the genial stranger that "Daddy's coming home for Christmas."

Christmas was only a few weeks off. Norfleet organized his campaign. He

told his story to the Los Angeles authorities. Two of the best known officers of the city were detailed to keep Furey's mansion under watch. They were Walter Lips and William J. Anderson.

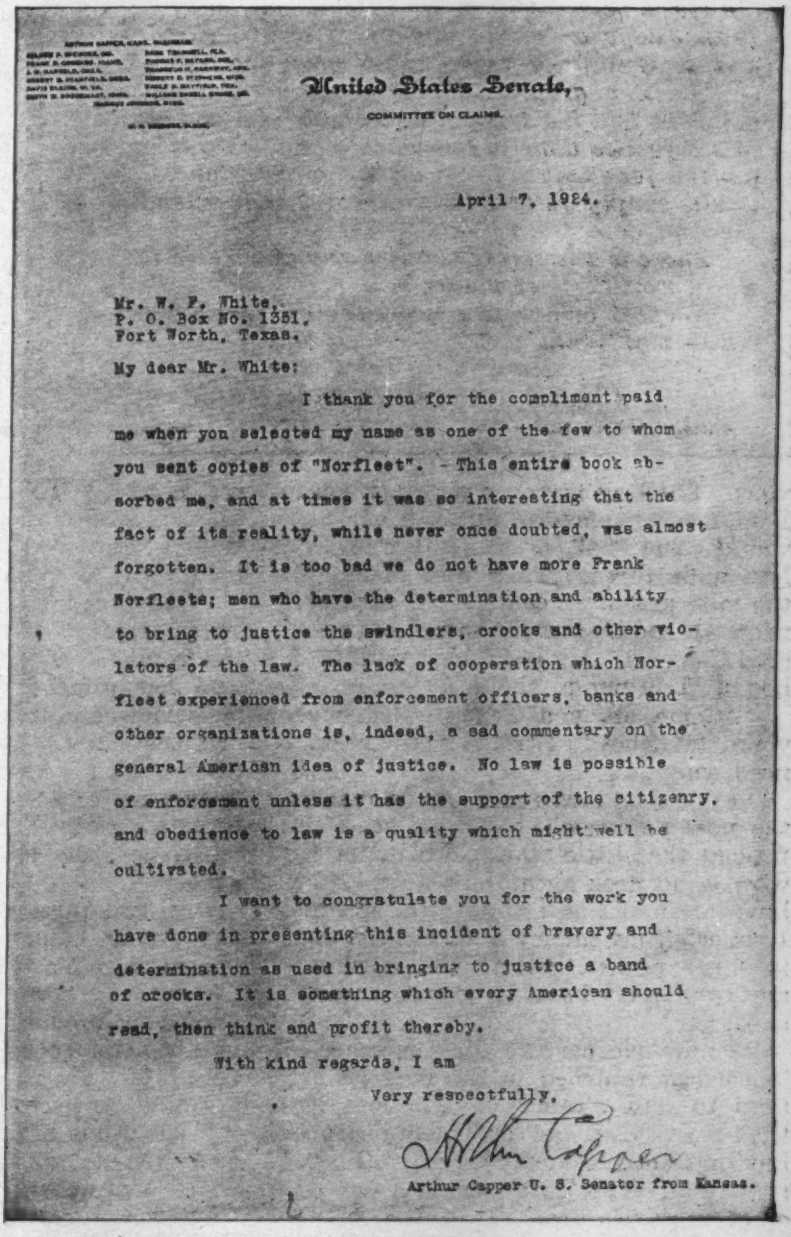
Norfleet hastened to San Francisco. He was going to overlook nothing. The apartment house to which had been sent the mysterious parcel from San Antonio was quickly found. The Texan shadowed it. His efforts to enter were rudely repelled by attendants, but soon enough he got the information he wanted. He learned that a "big rich stock broker from New York lives here. He's gone most of the time, but is expected back for Christmas." The San Francisco police were put on the case.

Then there came a message from Los Angeles that Furey at that moment was registered at San Diego.

"I left immediately," Norfleet writes, "but Furey was not in San Diego. The most careful search revealed no trace of his having been there. Indeed, I was told by a well-known detective watching the Tia Juana race-track that Furey, whom he knew well, had not been in San Diego. My trip had been in vain. To complicate my troubles, I was nearly out of money. All I had was ninety-three dollars.

"They say if you can learn a man's habits you can always find him. If anybody ever takes out after me, he will find me either at church or the race track. I went to Tia Juana that day with the idea of 'shooting my wad' on one race and either going broke or putting myself in ample funds.

"In the first race a Texas horse was entered. He was a six-to-one shot and he carried ninety dollars of my money. I climbed up on the fence to get a better



United States Senate,
COMMITTEE ON CLAIMS.

April 7, 1924.

Mr. W. F. White,
P. O. Box No. 1351,
Fort Worth, Texas.

My dear Mr. White:

I thank you for the compliment paid me when you selected my name as one of the few to whom you sent copies of "Norfleet". This entire book absorbed me, and at times it was so interesting that the fact of its reality, while never once doubted, was almost forgotten. It is too bad we do not have more Frank Norfleets; men who have the determination and ability to bring to justice the swindlers, crooks and other violators of the law. The lack of cooperation which Norfleet experienced from enforcement officers, banks and other organizations is, indeed, a sad commentary on the general American idea of justice. No law is possible of enforcement unless it has the support of the citizenry, and obedience to law is a quality which might well be cultivated.

I want to congratulate you for the work you have done in presenting this incident of bravery and determination as used in bringing to justice a band of crooks. It is something which every American should read, then think and profit thereby.

With kind regards, I am

Very respectfully,

Arthur Capper

Arthur Capper U. S. Senator from Kansas.

*Senator Capper's letter of appreciation of Norfleet's book and achievement.*

*The summary of this extraordinary man-hunt will be concluded in the August issue of* McCLURE'S MAGAZINE. *It will describe the thrilling continent-wide pursuit of W. B. Spencer, and the great Denver raid.*

*The amazing facts on which this series is based are fully supported by a wealth of documentary evidence in the hands of* McCLURE'S MAGAZINE, *including newspaper clippings, official documents, letters, and so forth. The judge who tried these men writes Norfleet:*

*"Roughly, I would say ninety-five per cent of the story passed before me in evidence, either as Trial Judge or under my direct scrutiny and I find it truthfully recorded in your manuscript. . . . The graphic, thrilling manner in which you have told the story of a clean, determined man to see justice done is remarkable and were it not for the fact that I know all the circumstances, I would simply remark that Norfleet is a splendid piece of detective fiction.*

*"There is a lesson for both young and old in this story, worthy of emulation.*

*"Norfleet brings to my mind most forcibly the old maxim 'truth is stranger than fiction.'*

*Yours very truly,*
*(Signed) George E. Hosey,"*
*Judge Criminal District Court, Tarrant County.*

view. Shading my eyes with my hand, I watched the cloud of dust out of which would come $540, or if not I would be left with three. They had gone half the mile and were coming on, neck and neck. A saddle blanket would have covered them all. My heart beat with their hoofs. I began to shout.

"'Come on, you Texas! Remember your state, boy! Stretch your neck, I need you!'

"I guess he heard me. As he reached the post he stretched out his head and pushed that little white face under the wire a full neck ahead of the field. My limbs trembled as I slid to the ground. I collected my money and stuck it deep into my pocket, rolling the bills over and over in my hand to be sure I wasn't dreaming.

"I now had carfare for somewhere."

Norfleet returned to Los Angeles and then to San Francisco. He was told that Furey had not put in appearance but that both residences were still being shadowed. The Texan made a few discreet inquiries into the source of the message summoning him to San Diego, but learned nothing. Thomas Lee Woolwine was district attorney at Los Angeles. Woolwine questioned Norfleet minutely about the message, shook his head ominously and changed the Glendale guard.

The days passed without result. By now desperate, the Texan posted himself before one of the telegraph offices. Another plan had formed in his mind. As the clerks emerged for the day, in little groups and singly, each one came under his scrutiny. Finally:

"A little lady stepped out with head up. She looked good to me. I stopped her, and quieted her fright with a reassuring gesture. 'Little lady,' I said, 'I am in trouble and need your help. I am a Texas man, a husband, a father and a man. The favor I am going to ask of you is one that your mother would want you to grant. Will you help me?'

"She gave me one long look from her sweet, steady eyes. Then, 'Yes, sir,' she replied. I told her my story. I told her somebody had double-crossed me somewhere, that I was certain Furey had been in Los Angeles but was now gone. Would she watch the incoming telegrams, and if one arrived for the Glendale address would she notify me? 'Yes, sir,' she answered with flashing eyes.

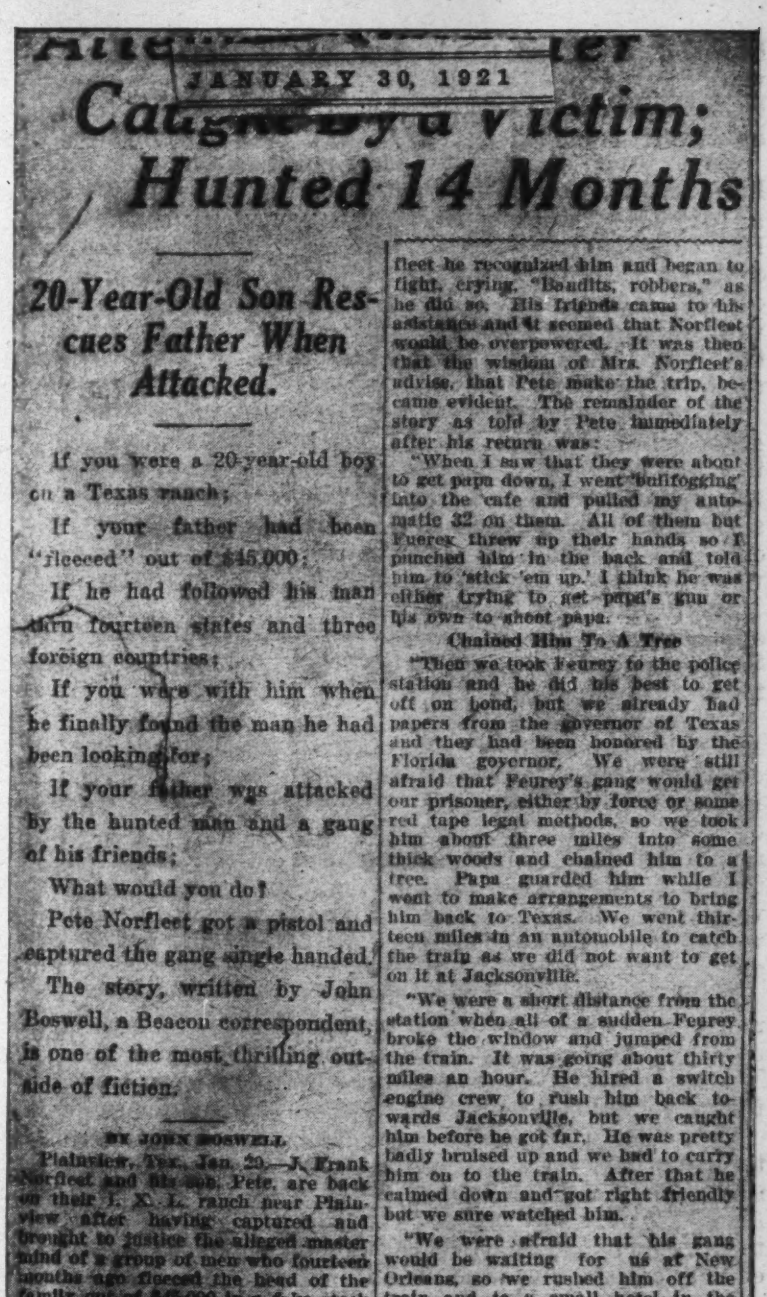
One, two, three days passed. The holiday was at hand. Norfleet sorrowfully telegraphed his wife not to expect him. The waiting was agony. He had never known such loneliness. He sat for hours in his hotel room; he paced the lobby floor until he expected to be asked by the clerk to leave the floor pattern.

"Then, one night, came a sweet voice over the telephone. Joe Furey had wired his wife a sum of money as a Christmas present, from Jacksonville, Florida. The message was signed Joe, but I knew! I glanced at the clock.

It was 10:30 p. m. The next train for Florida left at 2 a. m. Three and one-half hours with nothing to do!"

Norfleet *did* go home for Christmas. Hale Center, Texas, is only eighteen miles off the line from California to Florida. The jubilant Texan burst in on his family "just as the first spoonful of dressing was coming out of the big Christmas turkey. Shouts of joy arose at my entrance. My little daughter threw her arms around my neck; her mother, God bless her, flung herself upon me, and Pete, my boy, put a sympathetic hand into his dad's and wrung it with silent understanding. It was worth everything in the world to me to have that visit. Snatched from precious time, it filled me with new courage and determination to keep on."

Norfleet could give his family but one day. The next afternoon he was off. He stopped in Fort Worth to procure a warrant for the arrest of Furey; the warrant called upon the Florida authorities to deliver to J. F. Norfleet the person of one J. B. Stetson, charged with theft of over fifty dollars from the said Norfleet.



JANUARY 30, 1921

# Caught by a Victim; Hunted 14 Months

## 20-Year-Old Son Rescues Father When Attacked.

If you were a 20-year-old boy on a Texas ranch;

If your father had been "fleeced" out of $45,000;

If he had followed his man thru fourteen states and three foreign countries;

If you were with him when he finally found the man he had been looking for;

If your father was attacked by the hunted man and a gang of his friends;

What would you do?

Pete Norfleet got a pistol and captured the gang single handed.

The story, written by John Boswell, a Beacon correspondent, is one of the most thrilling outside of fiction.

BY JOHN BOSWELL.

Plainview, Tex., Jan. 29.—J. Frank Norfleet and his son Pete, are back on their J. X. L. ranch near Plainview after having captured and brought to justice the alleged master mind of a group of men who fourteen months ago fleeced the head of the family out of $45,000 in a fake stock selling scheme at Fort Worth. Wednesday they placed Joe Feurey, alias J. B. Stetson, in the Fort Worth jail after a chase thru fourteen states and three foreign countries. Now they are back on their ranch, content in the knowledge that they have upheld the creed of the West by bringing the man who had wronged them to just punishment. They were not content to appeal to officers to catch their man. They secured warrants and went after them themselves. Single handed Pete Norfleet captured a gang of five men who attempted to rescue Feurey from his father and himself. Feurey was taken from Jacksonville, Fla., to Fort Worth by the Norfleets.

Feurey was arrested in Jacksonville on a telegram from the Norfleets. He was taken before the governor of Florida and refused to waive extradition. Governor Hardee issued a warrant for his delivery to the Norfleets. Feurey was then taken before a judge and refused to waive extradition. The judge issued a warrant for his delivery to the Norfleets. Feurey was then taken before a judge and refused to waive extradition. The judge issued a warrant for his delivery to the Norfleets.

At Fort Worth Norfleet was overtaken by his boy. Mrs. Norfleet had noted, with a stab of pain, that her husband looked drawn and worn, and "Go with him, son," she said.

"We went straight to Tallahassee, Florida," Norfleet writes. "I was after a requisition warrant from Governor Hardee, of Florida. Armed with that, I could take Furey out of the state without the interference of his friends, or without tripping upon the coils of red tape which wind around those who wish to do business in a hurry.

"Luck was with us. We saw the governor without any trouble. I have found it true that usually the only person in any important office who has no time to see you or is too busy to be polite is the office boy. I explained to the governor what I wanted. I said I expected to get Furey in Jacksonville, and, with a requisition warrant for him in the name of Stetson, I could take him out of Florida the minute I got him.

"Governor Hardee had heard of me and was anxious to assist me. He made out the warrant, signed it, and stamped its face with the great seal of the State of Florida. I would not have traded this document for all the jails and penitentiaries in the State. The governor wished me the best of luck and hoped I would get Furey and not let Furey get me.

"We arrived in Jacksonville next morning. We got a list of the leading hotels. Pete took four and I the others. We agreed to report to each other every forty-five minutes.

"Pete had never seen Furey. The only thing he had was a picture and my description. I cautioned him to be positive he had Furey and no one else, before tackling him. I also cautioned him to be equally certain that when he did pick up a hand he was not to lay it down for anybody."

Four thousand miles straight to Furey! The end of the first 45-minutes watch had not come when Pete reported sight of the quarry. The boy was not mistaken. Soon Norfleet himself saw the not-to-be-forgotten figure swinging through the street throng as the Master Mind shouldered his way into a restaurant.

From Norfleet's book:

"Motioning for Pete to follow, I trailed in behind. Pete had not seen Furey enter the restaurant. He thought I was going in for a bite to eat and he loitered along. As I stepped inside I saw that all the tables were occupied. The head waiter motioned me to a seat at Furey's table. My eyes followed his indicating finger.

"At that instant Furey, opening his napkin, looked up and saw me. I saw recognition leap into his eyes. His trembling fingers clinked the table silver against the china with a metallic tinkle. He gripped the table with his hands and his face blanched. He pushed the table from him and half-rose from his chair. As he did so, I reached the table and stood directly in front of him. As he opened his mouth to yell, I threw down on him with my gun, exclaiming: 'You can't do it, Furey! You're my prisoner!'

"This had no effect, for he raised his voice and cried out in a loud appeal: 'Don't let him rob me, men! He'll take my diamonds! For God's sake, help!'

"The dining-room was in a panic. Men, women and children fled. There were cries of 'Police! Police!'

"At this moment I saw an expression of relief come over Furey's face. My back was toward the door. Help in some form was coming to him. Before I could turn I was seized from behind, and my right arm—the one with the gun—went behind me.

"Furey kicked his chair away and made a rush for the door. As he lunged past me I reached out with my free arm and sank my fingers into his coat lapel until they nearly met my palm through the cloth. Some one in the crowd grabbed the muzzle of my gun and tried to wrench it loose. I could not see how many people were behind me, but it seemed I had the world at my back. The room swam before my eyes. I was dragged by the back of my coat collar toward the door. Bang! bang! went the overturned tables. But I hung on.

"At this moment a powerful knee was driven into my back and an arm locked about my neck, tight under my chin. Then another arm went across my shoulder and my wrist was tightly clamped. I glanced down at the hand. Where had I seen it before, that big scarred paw with the black hair growing the wrong way? In a flash I was back in the stock

exchange at Daytona. I saw the New Yorker, crumpling in his great scarred hand a little scrap of paper.

"'I wish I had killed him that day on the road,' I thought in agony.

"Furey had fallen forward and sunk his long white teeth deep in my hand, between the knuckles. I jerked it out of his mouth. The blood spurted up, blinding him. If he thought that act of cannibalism could loosen my grasp of him he was mistaken. I could have dragged him clear to Texas. Nothing could dislodge my grip except cutting my hand off.

"Both of us had been wiping up the floor for the length of sixty feet. I was making a desperate effort to save my hand from Furey's jaws, and to prevent myself from being choked by my old combatant from Daytona. I could think of nothing that would save the situation. I didn't want to kill Furey. We were nearing the end of a long trail. We had gone that far without bloodshed. That's why I did not shoot him. In the riot I had forgotten about Pete, so used was I to battling single-handed. But just as hope seemed gone, I saw Pete drive his gun into Furey's side."

Pete had been sauntering along, but when he took up his hand he played it. The clamor in the cafe told him that his father's big minute had come. The boy dashed into the terrified crowd. Climbing over chairs and tables he fought his way to Norfleet's side. He was using his pistol as a club as he grappled with his father's assailant. Twice the gun swished through the air, to drop with resounding thuds. Norfleet was free.

"Pete yelled that he was an officer and held a warrant for Furey's arrest. This he punctuated with another jab in the fugitive's ribs. A big police officer slid through the crowd, and, coming up behind Pete, raised his club to cave in the boy's skull. I saw the man's Shrine pin and called 'Noble!' just in time. Like a flash he deflected the blow. The club bounced off Pete's shoulder. I cried out, 'For Heaven's sake, man, can't you see we are officers, the same as yourself? There is a county warrant in my son's pocket. If you can't believe me, take a look at it.'

"I ordered him to call Detective Captain Cahoon. 'He knows me and my business,' I said, and that was the truth; Cahoon was a staunch friend from first to last. Other policemen came in, cleared the wrecked cafe and hustled the loiterers out. Furey's confederates had disappeared; anyhow, I was too busy to fool with them. I passed Furey over to the grasp of the officer while I bound up my hand with a linen napkin. Then we carried him to the police station. I showed my warrant, signed by the Governor. Furey was ours."

Norfleet's plan was to "shove out" with Furey before the captive's friends could organize their forces and attempt to effect his release on bail. The Georgia state line was his immediate destination, thence New Orleans and Fort Worth. A taxi was called and Furey, handcuffed, was pitched in bodily. The negro chauffeur was instructed to drive to a flag station fourteen miles from Jacksonville.

"A friend had suggested that if I took him there I could secrete him in the forest until the first train came along," Norfleet says. "By hiding him thus, I could prevent habeas corpus proceedings being instituted against me. It struck me as a good plan and we started off in the direction of the flag station.

"A creek ran alongside the railroad bed and made a sharp bend about three hundred yards from the track. The vicinity was well wooded. Woodsmen had thinned the virgin forest, leaving here and there a pine stump two or three feet high. The broad, flat shielding palmetto shrubs were thick and provided ideal seclusion.

"I got Furey out of the car and sat him on a stump facing the road and flag station. He plumped his big body down with a sigh and dejectedly folded his handcuffed hands.

"'Norfleet,' he wailed, 'can't we get down to business? I'll give you every penny you lost for my freedom, $20,000 of it to-night. Your son can go back to Jacksonville and get it and I'll stay here with you.'

"'Where are you going to get the $20,000?' I inquired.

"'My friends were there with me in the restaurant.'

"'Was Spencer there?'

"'Yes, and others, too. We were just closing a big deal. In another hour it would have been finished and I would have had my percentage of $17,000—but you spoiled it, you old fox.'

"He proposed writing out an order payable to Pete, to be presented to the secretary of the stock exchange. I needed money badly. I told him I was going to let him write out the order, but if anything happened to Pete—if he had not returned by sundown—Furey's light was going out. I felt that he was sincere, as he knew that I would surely kill him if the boy did not return by sundown. Pete took the order, jumped into the car and told the negro to 'step on it.'

"'I'll be back before the sun goes to sleep, dad,' he called to me, 'and bring Spencer along if I can.' When I saw him speeding away, into God knows what danger, I wondered if I had done the right thing."

Pete did not get the money. He found the "stock exchange." Seven men were frantically packing away the paraphernalia. The secretary was not in, Pete was told, but one of the attendants volunteered to go find him. Then another and another, until, one by one, they left the room—and did not return. While Pete was waiting, his father, back in the palmetto woods, was "having unshirted hades." An ambuscade almost "got" him. From the book again:

"Furey was bitter. He said: 'I wish we had killed you the last time you were in Florida. We planned to but didn't go through with it. I have lost through your hounding as much money as I ever made.'

"I took out my leather bill folder, and from among the contents extracted the crumpled note which had so nearly cost me my life in Daytona; the note signed 'Joe,' imploring the boys not to let me get away. Furey looked sheepish as he handed the paper back to me, and told me quite willingly that when his friends had me in their automobile they purposely passed his hotel, slowly, in order to give him the opportunity to see and size up their latest victim. Furey had immediately recognized me, and he had no way of getting the information to his friends that I was Norfleet except by the messenger who brought the note in the motor boat.

"'How did you get here so quick?' he said suddenly. 'Twenty days ago I left you in California.'

"'Well, Furey,' said I, watching him narrowly to see the effect of my words, 'those California officers gave us both a fine double-crossing.'

"He darted a glance at me that I will never forget. The blood receded from his big face and left him chalk white. Then it rushed up into the roots of his hair, staining his face a deep red.

"'Norfleet!' he cried. 'Did they squeal on me? I paid them $20,000. They wrung it from me. They caught me when I went home to Glendale and they put their price at $20,000. I paid it. I bought my release and this is what they have done to me. My liberty has cost me $1,000 a day.'

"He covered his face with his hands, and between his fingers I could see the heavy veins swell out until his forehead was seamed with ridges."

Norfleet was himself weak from the revelation. He remembers having a terrible fear that Furey would have an apoplectic stroke before the truth could be dragged from him about the Los Angeles detectives, Lips and Anderson. But Furey rushed on:

"'They ran out on me just as I was kneeling on the sidewalk to take my little boy in my arms. Before I could move they pounced on me, coupling my hands like this!' He raised his manacled wrists.

"'I made a desperate break for liberty. I tried to jump over an eight-foot fence, but I hung there, like a scale in balance, and finally I fell backward. Bullets from the officers' guns hailed about me. I thought I was done for, but now I see why their aim was poor.

"'Then they shook me. And they shook hard: me, my wife and even my little boy. They demanded $20,000. My wife had only $4,000 in cash. I begged her to think of some way to get the rest. Finally one of us, I don't recall which, thought of my little son's money. Norfleet, my wife had saved nearly everything I had given her — she had absolutely refused to assist me in any way in my business—and had put it in the bank for the baby, to educate him. There was $8,000 in that fund.

"'I just had to have that money. Mrs. Furey went with one of the officers to the boy's school. They had the baby sign a check for the entire sum.

"'There was still $8,000 due,' Furey went on. 'You were nosing around near there when Lips and Anderson took me

to San Francisco. I told them I could get the balance there. There was a meeting one night in the Oakland cemetery. The $8,000 was delivered. I was released.'"

A feeling of pity came over Norfleet. Earnestly he asked:

"Joe, tell me this: Why, with your brains and education, your marvelous self-control, your gift of leadership, why are not you to-day Governor of New York instead of a criminal?"

From the book:

"Like a giant oak crippled by the storm, Furey collapsed. Tears sprang from his eyes and his great body swayed.

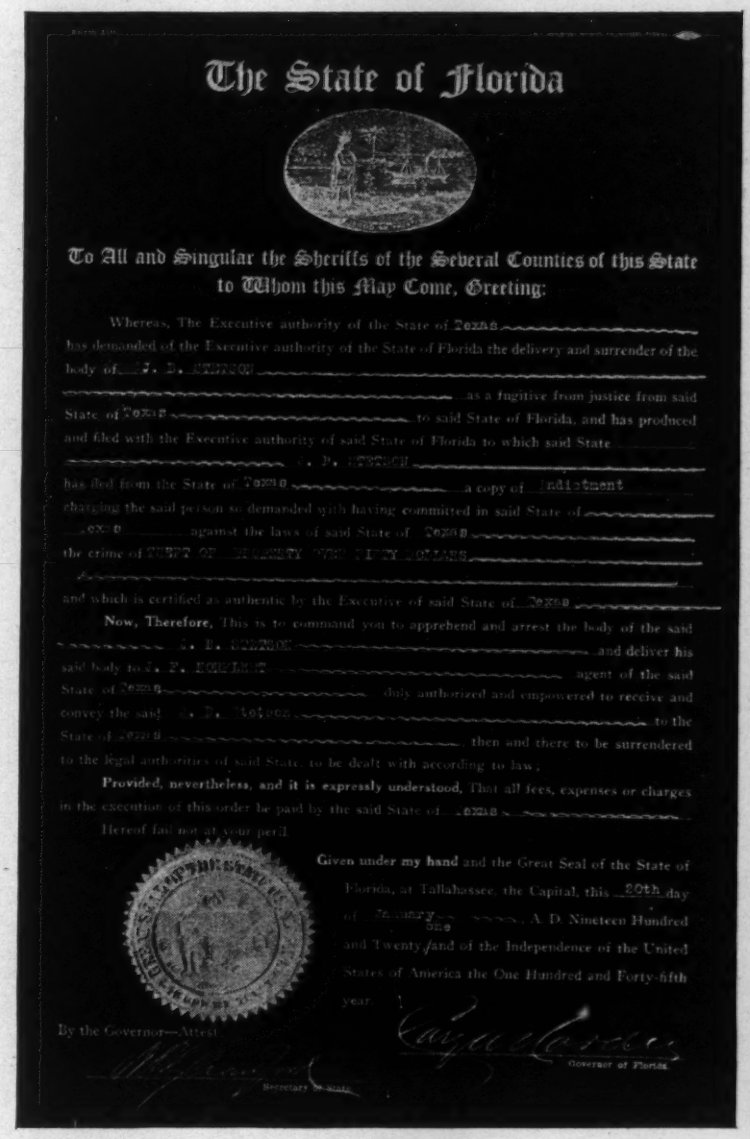
"'It all came from the lack of early training,' he sobbed. 'If you want a man to be good, you've got to start him young; no use trying to work him over after his habits are formed. When life steals a youngster's youth he just naturally turns crook to get even. I never had a fair chance. I had to keep on from one thrill to another to fight off remembering the things I had done. Memory is a luxury that only those who go straight can afford——'"

Furey was facing Norfleet. The Texan saw the muscles in his captive's neck suddenly contract. Furey flinched as if a blow had been aimed at him. "As a bolt of lightning illuminates the sky, the thought crashed across my brain that some one was behind me. I leaped back, and whirled.

"I saw the muzzle of a sawed-off shotgun not sixty steps behind me. Instantly it was jerked under the broad, flat fans of the dense palmettos. I sprang behind Furey, putting his heart between me and the shotgun. I pressed my gun against his head.

"'Furey,' I shouted, 'I am going to make an ambush out of you and this stump and sell out for the highest price I can get for myself. They are not going to take you away from me—not alive. Tell them to go back.'

"'Go back, men, for Heaven's sake, go back!' implored Furey. The woods rang with his supplications. Not a leaf stirred. Not a twig cracked. The forest was loud in silence. I called out again:



The State of Florida

To All and Singular the Sheriffs of the Several Counties of this State to Whom this May Come, Greeting:

Whereas, The Executive authority of the State of Texas has demanded of the Executive authority of the State of Florida the delivery and surrender of the body of J. P. NORFLEET as a fugitive from justice from said State of Texas to said State of Florida, and has produced and filed with the Executive authority of said State of Florida to which said State J. P. NORFLEET has fled from the State of Texas a copy of indictment charging the said person so demanded with having committed in said State of Texas against the laws of said State of Texas the crime of MURDER OF [illegible] and which is certified as authentic by the Executive of said State of Texas

Now, Therefore, This is to command you to apprehend and arrest the body of the said J. P. NORFLEET and deliver his said body to J. P. NORFLEET agent of the said State of Texas duly authorized and empowered to receive and convey the said J. P. NORFLEET to the State of Texas then and there to be surrendered to the legal authorities of said State, to be dealt with according to law;

Provided, nevertheless, and it is expressly understood, That all fees, expenses or charges in the execution of this order be paid by the said State of Texas

Hereof fail not at your peril.

Given under my hand and the Great Seal of the State of Florida, at Tallahassee, the Capital, this 20th day of January A. D. Nineteen Hundred and Twenty and of the Independence of the United States of America the One Hundred and Forty-fifth year.

By the Governor—Attest:

Secretary of State

Governor of Florida

*The warrant issued by the Governor of Florida to Norfleet enabling him to arrest Furey and take him back to Texas.*

"'If you, over there behind those palm leaf fans, don't show up, I'm going to do some bombarding into your hiding place that will either make you stand or lie down forever.'

"Like jumping jacks, four men sprang to their feet, showing heads and shoulders above their shelter. They were not woodsmen, but of the city type. Furey began his cries afresh:

"'Go back! Never mind who sent you, never mind what you were told to do, just go back!' They bent their heads together and spoke in low tones. Then, slowly, they moved back to the roadside.

"Long shadows from across the creek fell upon us. I pointed my thumb across my shoulder. 'Furey,' I said, 'look at that sun.' He turned and looked at the great crimson ball. A slice of its circular base had been cut off by the earth. It sank as if drawn from sight by unseen hands. My heart skipped.

There was no sign of Pete. My senses were quickened for the sound of a car. I thought, would Pete never come? Before me sat the man whose life I had sworn to take if Pete did not return by sunset. I would surely kill him. Furey felt my mood.

"'Norfleet,' he groaned, 'he will come! I know he will! I hear him now! Don't you hear it? Listen! listen!'

"I strained my ears until I thought they would drop from my head. It was the unmistakable hum of a car. It came rushing toward the firing squad. I lived years between the time I saw the car and until it came along the road between an armed flank of thugs. The least mistake, and God knows what the result, I thought. I put my gun behind Furey's ear again and waited as my boy rushed headlong into the trap set for us.

"Furey was quick to catch the drift. He waved his shackled hands aloft, crying monotonously, 'Men, for the love of Heaven, don't start anything! Let them take me!'

"As for their kidnapping Pete, the fear was an idle one. The car suddenly swung off the road and plowed its way down the little slope, stopping close to Furey and me.

"'Dad,' Pete called, 'what is this all about? What does it mean?'

"'Mean!' I shouted back. 'Don't ask me what it means. But I have been expecting unshirted hades to break loose since you left. Here, you,' to Furey, 'get on that back seat. We're gone from here.'"

The car whirled around, circled cautiously, faced the gunmen, and then roared between them. Jacksonville was fourteen miles away and nothing ahead! There was a half-hearted pursuit, but Norfleet's terrified negro driver was doing better than sixty miles an hour. Jacksonville was made without further mishap, and Furey was thrown aboard a New Orleans train while "All aboard!" was being called.

The Master Mind made his last break for freedom as the train was clearing the suburban railroad yards and traveling slowly. While Norfleet was standing in the aisle of the car blandly appeasing the curiosity of a throng of women passengers and Pete was laughing at the spectacle, Furey crossed his manacled hands before his eyes and dived through the car window. Norfleet heard the splinter of glass and whirled in time to see the soles of his captive's shoes disappearing through the jagged opening.

The train was pulled down. Their baggage was thrown after them. As Norfleet and Pete leaped to the ground they saw Furey running drunkenly down the track. A switch engine was passing. Furey, although badly hurt and bleeding profusely, jumped for it desperately. He was triumphantly borne away.

From the book:

"Down the track another switch engine was snorting and blowing off steam. I hurriedly explained our plight to the engineer. 'You bet your life we can catch him!' he exclaimed. 'Jump on!'

"He threw the throttle wide open and in another instant we were thundering down the rails. The other engine was rounding a curve ahead. We were almost in the Jacksonville railroad yards when our engineer blew several shrill blasts and the locomotive in front of us stopped. When Furey, bloody and dishevelled and dazed, dropped groggily to the ground, Pete and I were waiting for him. Explanations were made and Furey was ours again. We were forced to remain in Jacksonville another 24 hours, but I resisted all efforts to have him removed to a hospital, and we got away safely."

The Jacksonville Times-Union of that date reported that "Joseph Furey, aged 40, alleged notorious confidence man, with his hands and feet securely locked in steel bracelets, left Jacksonville Saturday for Fort Worth where he will face charges of grand larceny in connection with the swindling of nearly $50,000 three years ago from J. Frank Norfleet, Texas ranchman." The Times-Union described in detail Furey's sensational arrest in the cafe by Norfleet and his son, the swindler's escape from the train, and the character of his injuries.

The New Orleans Times-Picayune of the next day described the arrival of the party there, saying: "Mr. Norfleet's party arrived from Jacksonville Saturday night, showing plainly the effects of a hard fight. Mr. Norfleet and his son were battered and bruised and Furey was unable to walk on account of his fractured leg and rib. They were met here by District Attorney Brown of Fort Worth, Texas. Furey was taken to the Charity Hospital for treatment."

Forty-eight hours later Joe Furey was delivered at the Fort Worth jail, "where," say Norfleet, "we knew that the devil and all his assistants could not get him out. We had, after fourteen months of ceaseless searching, fulfilled the requirements of the requisition warrant, issued by the Governor of Florida five days before, to deliver the body of J. B. Stetson inside the jail door of Tarrant County, Texas.

Commenting on the arrival of the party, the Fort Worth Star-Telegram reported that "Furey was delivered to the jail in a wheel chair. He would not talk. He said, 'I'd die before I'd squeal on any of them.'"

Two months later Furey went on trial. The technical charge was theft of property of over the value of fifty dollars. On March 14, 1921, the Master Mind pleaded guilty and was sentenced to twenty years imprisonment in the Texas penitentiary. The Star-Telegram of that date reported him as "dressed in a neat fitting blue suit and wearing nose glasses," and observed that "Furey had anything but the appearance of a criminal. He conducted his own case, cross-examining several witnesses and making his own plea to the jury. He entered court on crutches, still lame from the injuries he received when he jumped from the train last January. His demeanor throughout the proceedings was composed and suave and his questioning of witnesses courteous in the extreme."

The book, Norfleet, then relates a series of the most astonishing episodes in Furey's life as a prisoner. They can be touched only lightly here. Furey had himself elected superintendent of the prison Sunday School, he was known as a model prisoner, and every one—from warden to prisoner—came under the influence of his magnetic personality.

All the while he was plotting. With assistance from California he planned a great prison delivery. A quartet of his staunch friends met one day in Houston and proceeded to the town of Huntsville, where the Texas penitentiary is located. Two had gone from California—and they were dogged to Texas by a detective from the office of District Attorney Woolwine.

The detective telegraphed his chief that a prison delivery was impending and Woolwine flashed warnings to the warden at Huntsville and the Governor of Texas. The effort was made, one Sunday morning, but Furey himself—while bedlam reigned above—was in solitary confinement. The plot had failed.

The last crushing failure broke Furey's strength. He literally wasted away, and on July 20, 1921, his restless spirit departed. The nation's master bunco swindler was dead, a felon. His faithful wife and a companion came to the prison doors to claim the body, and he was interred in Cypress Lawn cemetery, at Oakland, California; the same cemetery in which, months before, he had been "shaken down" for his last $8,000 by the Los Angeles officers as the price of his freedom.

But was he really dead?

There were rumors of a hoax. Neither Woolwine nor Norfleet was satisfied. Furey was buried July 26th. The San Francisco Examiner of August 5 said: "District Attorney Ezra Decoto of Alameda County says when the coffin is examined he will not be surprised to find any one of these three things:

"That the corpse is Furey's;

"That it is somebody else's;

"That there is no corpse.

"Furey was such a master of his craft in his lifetime that the authorities yesterday paid him the highest compliment possible to a deceased Wallingford. They accused him of 'buncoing' death, in his alleged demise."

Norfleet acted with characteristic promptness. At his urgent solicitation Woolwine had Furey's grave opened and the body photographed and finger-print measurements taken. There was no mistake. It was Furey, although the Los Angeles Examiner, in a dispatch from San Francisco, sounded this skeptical note: "The body had decomposed and identification was impossible, and so Furey became officially dead. Being what he was, Joe Furey will never get credit for dying, even if he is dead, but detectives have decided to let him rest in peace."

Norfleet now wanted W. B. Spencer, his fifth and last man. But he wanted something else first. Revenge burned in his heart. He was after the double-crossers and he hastened back to Los Angeles.

"Woolwine was astounded at my revelations," he writes. "At once he set the wheels of the law in motion. Without warning, Lips and Anderson were summarily jerked from their own official desks and unceremoniously locked within their own jail. They bitterly denied their guilt and employed able counsel.

"The trials were the most sensational the State of California had ever seen. Lips was tried first. It was proven that Lips and Anderson had not only shaken down Furey and his wife, but the cradle as well. The last cent in the savings account of the little boy had been taken."

The Los Angeles Times, reporting the trial, gave the testimony of Mrs. Dede Furey, who said she delivered to Lips and Anderson $7,700 belonging to her minor son. "While waiting for the money," her testimony ran, "the two officers and Mr. Furey registered at a Long Beach hotel, under assumed names."

The Times said, "It was shown by a handwriting expert that Furey had signed the assumed names." The Los Angeles Examiner said, "One of the features of the Lips trial was the testimony of Mark Furey, the 11-year-old son of the alleged confidence man. It was money set aside for the youngster's education, Mrs. Furey testified, which she claimed was given to the two officers."

On the person of Anderson a receipt to a safety box was found. It revealed the whole sordid story. The box was searched and there reposed most of the money that had been taken from Furey. According to the testimony of the banker who had handed out the last savings to Mrs. Furey on the day that the mother, child and one of the officers called at the bank, it was the same money. The bank markers were still on some of the packeted bills.

The case was strengthened when Anderson, sorely pressed, admitted the arrest of Furey and failure to turn him over to the law. This action, Anderson said, was taken because Furey promised to point out Spencer to them in return for being removed to San Francisco. It was in San Francisco, he said, that Furey escaped from him and Lips. As for the money found in the safety box, he declared that Furey had left it behind in his flight.

"We clinched the case," Norfleet says, "when I produced three witnesses, a woman and two contractors, who testified to seeing Furey's desperate attempt to jump over the eight-foot fence and his arrest. The jury promptly returned a verdict of guilty. Lips drew the limit—fourteen years at San Quentin. And in due time Anderson followed him. The last time I saw those two men, they were breaking rocks with eleven-pound hammers."

The Los Angeles Times, announcing Lips' conviction, reported his confession to Woolwine: "We were tempted and fell." The jury was out only twenty-seven minutes.

Norfleet restlessly returned to the chase.

"I was now free to take up the pursuit of Spencer," he writes. "He had been at large for nearly three years after swindling me, chiefly because I had been too busy to give him my attention. But I knew he was mine, and I knew that he knew it, and that was half the battle."

*Pender leaned across the table and his teeth showed in a sudden snarl. "You swine, I can hardly believe that I've got you at last."*

# OUT OF THE BLUE

*By* "SAPPER"

*Illustrated by L. F. Wilford*

BASIL PENDER looked thoughtfully round his sitting-room. Everything was just as usual, the prints, the photographs in their silver frames on the piano, the books in the corner; they were all just as they had been for the last five years. To-morrow night also there would be no change. The same prints, the same books, the same ceaseless rumble of London traffic coming through the open window——

To-morrow night, it was true, he would not be there himself. It was unfortunate but unavoidable. He would have liked to have spent the first few hours after he had murdered Sinclair in the surroundings where he had so often murdered him in spirit. But it was impossible.

It was something at any rate to have been able to begin his scheme in this familiar atmosphere. It augured well for success. No undue hurry, nothing precipitate—just the quiet, orderly working out of a carefully considered plan. And the first move in the game had already been taken.

Such a simple little move—and yet very important. It was in details of that sort that brain came in. Who could possibly attach any significance whatever to the fact that he had removed one of his two cars from the garage where he habitually kept them both, and placed it in another, where he was quite unknown? What had such a simple fact to do with murder?

He smiled gently, as he helped himself to a whiskey and soda. He was thinking of the conversation he had been listening to at the club only that very evening. Cresswell of the police had been holding forth on crime, and an intolerable bore he was. And yet there

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had been a certain amount in what he had said.

Undoubtedly the motive in a case of murder is the first thing for which the police look. No one but a madman commits a murder without a motive. Passion, hatred, money—once the motive is established it generally points with an unerring finger at someone. That was why Pender had left the club arm-in-arm with Sinclair and walked with him part of the way to his house in Brook Street. A very normal proceeding on the part of one of Sinclair's best friends.

He'd been devilish clever about it. No one knew, no one had even the ghost of suspicion of the deadly, black-hearted hatred he felt for the man he had just left. The world thought they were friends; even Sinclair himself thought so—fool that he was. It would come as a slight shock to him to-morrow when he realized the truth.

But no one else would ever know it. And in case his plan, thought out and perfected in every little detail since he had heard that Sinclair was going down alone to his empty house in Kent—just in case it miscarried, the question of motive would never indicate him with unerring finger. He was safe on that point.

Not that the matter was ever likely to arise in this case. Before people begin talking about motive it must look as if the cause of death was murder. And he had not the slightest intention of allowing Sinclair's death to look like murder. It was to be a shocking, ghastly accident. He pictured himself hurrying back from Scotland the moment he heard the terrible news, comforting Enid—Sinclair's wife.

Widow, rather—not wife; Sinclair's widow. Just his card to start with, his card and a little message of tender sympathy for her in her great sorrow. Perhaps some flowers. And then after a week or so he would see her for a few minutes, and let her realize how his heart bled for her. Nothing precipitate of course; he was far too old a stager with women for that. But in six months perhaps—or maybe a year—the time would be ripe.

Basil Pender's white teeth bared in a sudden ungovernable snarl. What waste of time! Six weeks, six minutes were too long to wait. How dared that swine Sinclair come between him and Enid? How dared he make her his wife?

The sweat glistened on his forehead and he shook his fists in the air. Then with a great effort he controlled himself. This was a frame of mind in which he had forbidden himself to indulge. It destroyed the power of clear thought, and clear thought was essential for success. After all the perpetration of a murder was very much like a game of chess. Move followed move, and provided no mistake was made the result was mate. And there would be no mistake in this case.

Nerve, brain and money; given those three attributes and the thing was easy. But it was interesting—devilish interesting. The whole thing had a fascination about it which he would hardly have believed possible. Once again his thoughts drifted back to Cresswell; what was it he had been saying? He could see him now with a fat cigar between his lips, lying back in his chair and emphasising his points with a podgy finger.

"It's those unexpected, unlooked for, unallowed for, isolated facts against which no criminal can guard, however skilfully he lays his plans. He may think that he has allowed for everything—taken into account every possible contingency. Then suddenly—out of the blue—comes one disconnected event, and the whole carefully thought out scheme goes wrong."

Well, of course, there was something in that. But the same might be said of anything in life, not only crime. And in this case he had reduced the risk of anything unexpected happening to a minimum. There was nothing difficult about his scheme; in fact it was extraordinarily simple. It amused him now to recall the complicated plans he had evolved in the past for killing Sinclair. For years he had hated him; from the days they were at school together he had hated him. And then to cap everything he had married Enid. It was that which had definitely suggested murder to his mind.

At first he had hardly treated the matter seriously. Idly he had thought out different schemes—schemes of all sorts and descriptions which had, however, one common factor. Each one of them ended in the same way—with Sinclair's

death. And gradually the matter had insisted upon being taken seriously. He found himself thinking of it at all hours of the day. If he woke in the night the picture of Sinclair with Enid by his side would come to him out of the darkness.

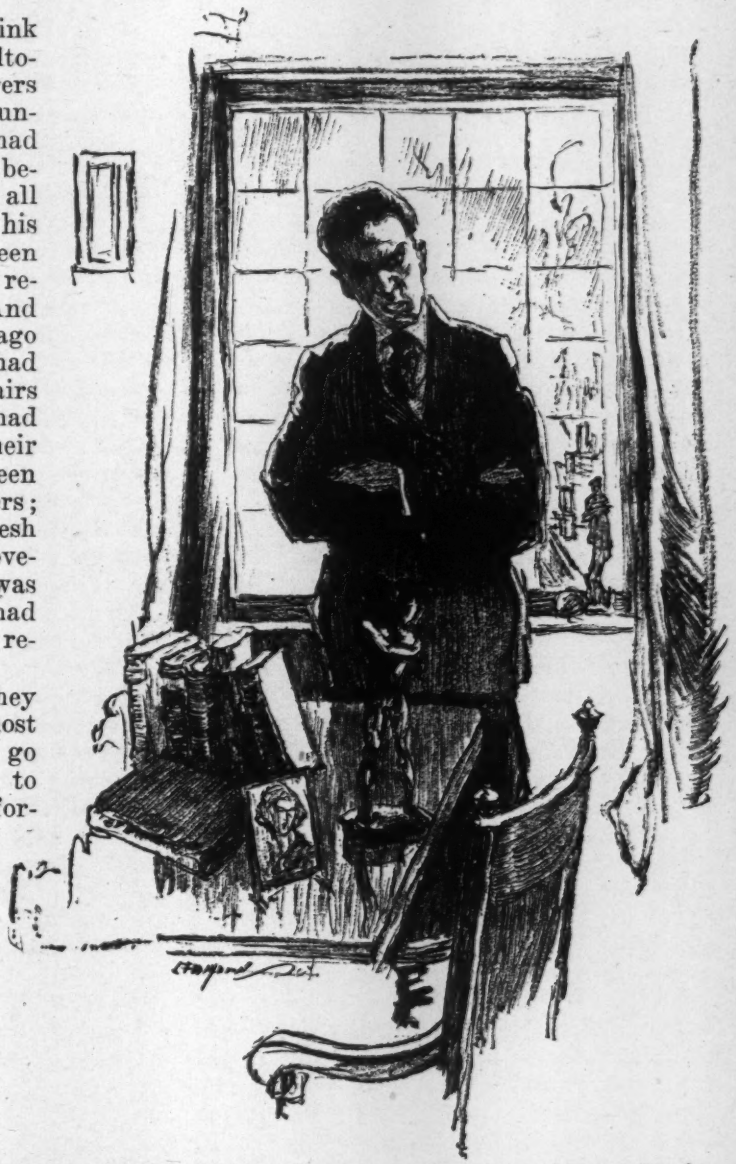
But it is one thing to think of murder; to do it is altogether different. Murderers who get caught suffer an unpleasant fate, and Pender had no intention whatever of being hanged. And since in all his schemes the risk of his suffering that fate had been pronounced, they had remained just schemes. And then suddenly three days ago had come the idea. He had been dining with the Sinclairs and the conversation had turned on White Lodge, their house in Kent. It had been in the hands of the builders; new bath-rooms put in, fresh papers, all sorts of improvements. And now it was empty, the workmen had gone, the keys had been returned to Sinclair.

"A darned good job they have made of it too," his host had said. "I've got to go down there on Thursday to get a gun of mine which I forgot to bring up with me. Why don't you come down with me, Basil? I know Enid can't; she's got some show on that day. We could take down some sandwiches, and feed in the hall. And we'll test the new radio set."

It had been some power outside his own that had made him answer as he did. At that moment the devilish idea had not come to him; he was only conscious of a strong desire to make some excuse to avoid spending a day alone with Sinclair. If Enid had been going it would have been different.

"Thanks very much," he had remarked, "but I shall probably be starting for Scotland on Thursday."

No more had been said. He usually did go to Scotland about that time, there was nothing strange or unusual in the act. But when he returned to his rooms, the idea had been born. He had not been going to Scotland on Thursday, but he had said so—said so in front of Enid. And Sinclair was going to White Lodge on Thursday—an empty house. He knew White Lodge well, he had stayed there in the past. It was a desolate sort of place, half a mile from the



*He would have liked to have spent the first few hours after he had murdered Sinclair in the surroundings where he had so often murdered him in spirit. But it was impossible.*

road and surrounded by trees. Enid had wanted her husband to sell it, but it had a sentimental attraction for him, and he had compromised by having it completely done up. There recurred to his mind a remark he had heard her make when she first saw the house.

"It looks the sort of place where anything might happen—murder or ghosts."

Murder! Strange that she should have said that. Almost prophetic. Murder! For a moment or two he had recoiled from the thought. This was different to the fantastic schemes he had so often planned out in the past. This was the real thing, he knew that with a sort of blinding certainty, even before he began to think out details. Well—what if it was? Step by step he had worked it out—discarding here, building up there. And after a while he became almost staggered with the simplicity of the thing. Surely murder must be a more complicated matter than this?

Coolly and logically he had examined every move, and could find no fault. And now once more on Wednesday night he strove to discover a flaw. It was not too late yet: he had done nothing incriminating so far. He had merely removed one of his two cars to a strange garage, and mentioned at the club that he was off to Scotland next morning. It was perfectly easy to return the car to its usual home and change his mind about Scotland.

And the other two things—the tiny phial filled with a colorless liquid, and the four short straps now reposing in the locked drawer of his desk. There was nothing suspicious about them. No question of poison—nothing so crude as that. Poison lingers in the system; and chemists ask questions if you ask them for poison. But a strong sleeping draft is quite a normal affair and straps of all sorts are useful for motoring.

No, there was no flaw. And with a smile of satisfaction Pender turned out the light and went to bed.

It was to his permanent garage that he repaired in the morning, and five minutes later he drove away in his touring Sunbeam. He left it in Waterloo Place, and getting into a taxi he gave the address of the second garage.

"Just starting for Scotland," he informed the manager, and having settled his bill he drove round to his rooms for luggage. It was early for much traffic, and half an hour saw him not far from his destination—Hitchin. And in Hitchin strange and peculiar magneto trouble occurred—due doubtless to the use of a screwdriver in skilful hands on that delicate piece of mechanism. So pronounced was the trouble, however, that it became necessary to invoke the assistance of a garage. And with becoming gravity he listened to the diagnosis.

"I see," he said, when the mechanic had finished. "Possibly some hours, you say. Then I think that I will go out and call on friends and return later. I might even stay the night with them. That will give you plenty of time to make a good job of it."

With which remark he left the garage, and made his way to the station where he took a first class return ticket to London. The excellent train service was one of the reasons which had made him decide on Hitchin. It was not too close into London, but the journey did not take long. And it was essential that he should be at White Lodge before lunch.

He ran over the car time-table as he sat in his corner seat. He would take the Sunbeam from Waterloo Place, and motor down to White Lodge in it. He knew the exact spot where he would leave it—not too near the house, not too far away. A deserted spot where the chances of the car being seen were remote. And even if it was seen who would pay any attention?

Then after it was over he would return to London, and leave it in St. James's Square. Not Waterloo Place again; the man in charge there might recognize him. And then back to Hitchin by train. It would depend on the time whether he telephoned to his usual garage from there or from some place further north.

"Completely forgot the Sunbeam. Send a man round to St. James's Square for it."

That would be the message; further proof that he was on his way to Scotland. But he couldn't have done it if both cars had been at the same place. It looks silly to get one car to start with and then go back a few minutes later to get the other.

Brain—that was it; that was the whole secret. Just like chess only a

thousand times more fascinating.

It was half past eleven as he drove past the Oval. He had an hour's run before him, and it struck him that he could not have timed it better. Sinclair was dining at Ranelagh that evening, so he wouldn't be remaining too late at White Lodge. And any way the sooner the thing was done the better. It would enable him to get further on the Great North Road before calling up his garage.

He left the car in the place he had decided on. Not a soul was in sight; for the last two miles he had seen no one. The house was a hundred yards away almost hidden in the trees, and he strolled towards it quite openly.

There was a possibility that Enid might have altered her mind at the last moment, or that Sinclair had brought someone else down with him. If so he was not committed to anything: therein lay the beauty—the simplicity of the scheme. He had merely changed his mind about Scotland, and having nothing better to do had run down to see the improvements at White Lodge, just as Sinclair had suggested.

At the front door stood Sinclair's car, and as Pender stepped on to the drive Sinclair himself appeared.

"Hullo! old man," he cried. "I thought you were going to Scotland."

"Changed my mind at the last moment," said Pender easily, "so I thought I'd come down and see the house."

"But where's your car?"

"I stupidly missed the turn out of the village and got on to the track leading through the copse. It's up there now."

"Well, it's quite safe there anyway. Let's have some lunch, and then I'll show you round."

"All alone?" asked Pender.

"Yes, Enid couldn't come."

He was rummaging in the car for sandwiches and Peter turned away quickly. So it was the end after all. At the moment he did not want Sinclair to see his face.

"Come on in. There is enough grub here for a regiment, and I'll search round and get another glass."

He led the way to the gunroom, leaving his flask on the table. Then he went out and Pender heard him wandering round the back premises. Now that the actual time had come he felt as cool as ice—it was all so simple and easy. From his pocket he took the little phial, and taking out the stopper he emptied the contents into the flask. Then slipping the empty phial back in his pocket he strolled over to the window.

"This is about the only room in the house they haven't touched," Sinclair said, as he came in with a glass a few moments later. "I left everything as it was in here—guns and all. Say when."

"I won't have any whiskey thanks. Just a little of that Perrier."

"Well, I've got a thirst on me like the devil," said the other, mixing himself a drink. "Get on with the sandwiches."

Sinclair drained his glass with a sigh of relief, and proceeded to mix himself another.

"They really have made a very good job of it. The extra bathrooms make the whole difference."

"Excellent," said Pender. "I shall look forward to having a go at your pheasants later on."

His eyes, narrowed and expectant, had seen the sudden half drunken lurch given by Sinclair.

"Good Lord, Pender," he cried. "I feel funny."

"Take another drink. It may be the heat or something."

"I feel—absolutely—blotto. It can't be anything — anything — matter — whiskey."

He looked stupidly across the table, and then his eyes closed and his head fell forward. With a gigantic effort he rose to his feet, only to fall back in his chair again. Sinclair slept.

With a faint smile Pender got up. The thing was done. There were one or two small points now to be attended to, but the main thing was done and more successfully and easily than he had ever dared to hope.

First he took from his pocket a pair of wash leather gloves, and picking up his glass he dried it carefully with a clean pocket handerchief. Then leaving the room he returned it to its proper place in the pantry. Next he took up the flask and Sinclair's tumbler and emptied the contents of both down the sink, afterwards replacing them on the table beside the unconscious man. To give the impression that the flask had been emptied would make the accident seem

more credible. Just a little too much to drink, just enough to make Sinclair a trifle careless——

Then from his pocket he removed four straps, and still retaining his gloves he fastened Sinclair's hands and feet to the arms and legs of the chair in which he was sprawling. He wasn't quite sure how long it would be before Sinclair recovered from the effect of the sleeping draught, and the binding process must be done before that happened.

And now remained only the final thing. From the glass-fronted cupboard in the corner he took a double barreled gun, and into one of the barrels he slipped a cartridge. Sinclair still slept.

For a moment or two Pender hesitated. It would be so easy to do it now. And it would be safer. Everything had gone so wonderfully that it seemed like tempting Fate to delay. There sat the man he hated, unconscious and at his mercy. He had only to press the trigger, and the thing would be done. But where would be the satisfaction in that? He wanted Sinclair to understand—to realize what was going to happen to him. He wanted revenge, and to kill an unconcious man was no revenge. He wanted to see terror dawn in those keen blue eyes. Above all, he wanted to speak about Enid.

Half an hour passed and Sinclair still lolled forward in his chair, while Pender sat opposite him—waiting. And then suddenly the sleeper awoke and stared dazedly across the table.

"Where am I?" he muttered foolishly. "What's happened?"

"You are at White Lodge, Sinclair" said Pender quietly. "And I gave you a little drug to send you to sleep which seems to have acted admirably."

"But why am I bound like this?" He was struggling against the fog.

"Because before I kill you I want to have a talk with you, Sinclair. And I adopted that method to ensure your keeping still."

Sinclair blinked foolishly. Kill! What the devil was Pender talking about? Was he mad? Were they both mad?

"Doubtless you feel a little surprised, Sinclair. You wonder if you are still dreaming. But I can assure you that you are not; you are very much awake."

"Is this some silly jest, Pender?" His mind was clearing rapidly. "If so, it's gone far enough. And what the devil is that gun doing on the table?"

"We will come to the gun in due course, my friend." Pender leaned across the table, and his teeth showed in a sudden snarl. "You swine, I can hardly believe that I've got you at last."

Sinclair said nothing; full realization of his position had come to him. Of course the man had gone off his head; he was alone—bound and powerless—with a homicidal maniac.

"Please don't think that I'm mad, Sinclair," continued Pender, as if divining his thoughts. "I can assure you that I've never been saner in my life. This is merely the logical outcome of the intense hatred I've felt for you for years. It started at school, Sinclair. Do you remember on one occasion thrashing me till I was almost unconscious?"

"Because you came for me with a knife," answered the other quietly.

"I don't care why—but the fact remains that you thrashed me. That started it, Sinclair. I swore then that some day I'd get my own back."

"In spite of the fact that you shook hands the next day," said Sinclair scornfully. "You rotten Dago."

"So you always called me—all you fellows." Pender's voice shook with ungovernable rage. "Do you suppose I could help having South American blood in me? Anyway the rotten Dago has got the upper hand now."

He controlled himself and went on: "As I say, that started it, Sinclair. And all through school it was the same. It was Sinclair Captain of the Eleven; Sinclair Captain of the Fifteen; Sinclair Senior Prefect. And it was Sinclair who in his kindly benevolence accorded his divine protection to the rotten Dago. Do you think I liked you for it, you swine? I loathed you all the more. There's no good straining at those straps. They're new and strong."

"You entrancing exhibition of beastliness," roared Sinclair "Do you mean to tell me that after all these years—after having dined in my house and eaten my salt—you propose to kill me, because I did better than you at school."

"Good Heavens, no! I was merely starting at the beginning. I don't deny that frequently I have felt like murdering you. At country houses sometimes when it's been Sinclair who was shoot-

ing so wonderfully—and Sinclair who played polo so marvelously—Sinclair this, and Sinclair that—I could have killed you willingly. But I don't think I should ever have done it but for one thing—Enid."

Sinclair sat very still. He understood at last. And though no sign of it showed on his face, fear was clutching at his heart. No maniac this, but a dangerous revengeful man.

"Did you know I asked her to marry me, Sinclair? Of course you do. And she refused. But she might have accepted me in time if you hadn't come on the scene. Always you—always you. She is the only woman in the world whom I have ever wished to make my wife, Sinclair. And she is yours."

"So that is why you propose to murder me," said Sinclair. "A nice method of disposing of a husband, but as a means of endearing yourself to the widow—a trifle crude."

He was talking for time—trying desperately to think.

"And do you really imagine, Sinclair, that I shall let Enid discover the truth? You must have a very poor opinion of my intelligence. Your death will be entirely accidental, and when I hear about it in Scotland I shall hurry back to attend the—er—obsequies. I am on my way to Scotland now, you know."

"You fool," said Sinclair harshly. "They'll catch you for a certainty, and you'll hang."

"I think not" answered Pender. "I have devoted what brains I possess to this problem, and I venture to think—not unsuccessfully. You've no idea how fascinating it is—planning a murder. I won't weary you with the precautions I have taken to cover my tracks, but you can see for yourself two or three little things I have done in this room. My glass removed, for instance; a second glass would certainly give rise to comment. Your flask emptied, serving the double purpose of removing all traces of the drug and giving the impression that you had drunk a little too much. It will help to account for the accident that is shortly going to happen, Sinclair. A strange accident for such a careful shot as you—but these things will happen."

Sinclair moistened his lips.

"Cut fooling, Pender. This thing has gone far enough."

"I can promise you it is going considerably farther," sneered the other. "Right through to the end, in fact. That gun is loaded, and in a moment or two now I shall put the muzzle under your chin and blow your damned face off. An accident in cleaning will be the verdict, Sinclair, and I'll attend your funeral even as I attended your wedding. And then in time maybe Enid will do what she would have done if you hadn't come on the scene—marry me."

"You devil." The veins stood out like whipcord on Sinclair's forehead as he strained and tugged at the straps. And then of a sudden he sat very still. Pender had picked up the gun in his gloved hands. The end was very near, and with his head thrown back and a look of utter contempt he waited for it.

"The straps will be off when they find you, Sinclair; the gun on the floor at your feet. No unexpected, unlooked for event out of the blue, such as that fool Cresswell talked about, to save you; nothing to incriminate me."

The hatred in his eyes was maniacal; the cool scorn on the other's face seemed to drive him to a frenzy.

"You can sneer," screamed Pender, "but you won't when the muzzle is an inch from your chin and my finger is on the trigger. This is the position, Sinclair—just as I am now; only it will be your chin not mine."

He sat there, the gun between his knees, his chin almost resting on the muzzle.

"Just like this" he repeated softly.

"Hullo!"

It came from the hall—a man's cheerful hail, and Pender gave a violent start.

"Hullo! Hullo!"

Then a pause.

"240 calling."

But there was no one to listen to the prominent politician's speech on the Near East which continued cheerfully for the next half hour.

For Sinclair—well Sinclair had fainted for the first time in his life.

And Pender—well Pender had had his finger—that carefully gloved finger—near the trigger when he gave that violent start. And his chin had been almost resting on the muzzle.

In fact, it was only by his clothes that a few hours later he was officially identified as Pender.

*Chokois ready for the wedding; the bridegroom, with wedding bouquet, in the center.*

# HUNTING THE WHITE INDIANS

*By* A. HYATT VERRILL

FROM Brazil to Mexico—in Guiana, Venezuela, Colombia, Panama and Central America — one hears from natives and Indians, innumerable tales of "white Indians"—strange, savage, retiring denizens of the vast jungles or interminable mountains of the interior. The stories vary little save in minor details. Sometimes the "white" Indians are gigantic, fierce cannibals, again they are timid, undersized and peaceful, or they may be quite like their neighbors in all but color of skin, hair and eyes. How did these persistent tales originate? Is there any truth in them, and, if so, who or what are the "white" Indians?

*The wedding guest wore a curious hat.*

It was with the expectation of finding such tribesmen—savages in whose veins flowed enough European blood to warrant the name "white" being applied to them—that I undertook two excursions into Latin American jungles.

My first attempt was made in British Guiana. Here, despite every effort, though I made diligent inquiries among all the tribes I visited during nearly three years in the interior of the country, I seemed as far as ever from solving the mystery until, one day, an Indian brought me in a number of utensils and specimens of savage handiwork. There were the usual feather crowns, the bows and arrows, seed necklaces and bead aprons, and among them two paddles that instantly attracted my attention. Not only were they of unusual form, quite distinct from anything I had seen, but the handles were elaborately and beautifully carved in open scroll work of most graceful design. I knew beyond doubt that they were from some unknown tribe I had not visited, and most remarkable of all, the broad, spear-shaped blades were decorated with incised designs of interlocking circles and semicircles—something unknown among any of the tribes of Guiana.

But my Arowak collector could give me very little information as to their origin. He had secured them, along with the other articles, from Indians

*A Kuna village, Darien, Panama, where even the old chief posed for me.*

"topside" or up the river, from wandering Akawoia traders, but that was enough for me. Somewhere up the Demerara River was an undescribed, unvisited tribe—it seemed to me a promising field for exploration.

No one knew anything about the denizens of the upper reaches of the river or of the country between there and the Berbice and, upon inquiry, I learned to my surprise that the Demerara, despite the fact that it is commercially the most important river in British Guiana and

*The Chokoi chief was a striking figure with his fine face framed in a mane of hair.*

*The Toilette—Chokoi bridegroom and best men dressing for the wedding.*

comparatively small, had never been mapped or explored above Cannister Falls, and that its source and head waters were absolutely unknown.

Having decided to make an expedition I found that not a negro, Boviander or Indian could be found who would agree to accompany me on my proposed trip. One and all were filled with a vague superstitious fear. They told stories of insurmountable difficulties, of rumors of weird savage beasts and semi-human beings who dwelt in the unexplored country, and nothing would tempt them to go beyond the known reaches of the river. I had about given up in despair when by accident I met two Boviander youths and a young Arekuna Indian who were born adventurers. All three at once offered to accompany me or, as they put it "take a walk topside" regardless of man, God or devils.

At each and every village on our way I made diligent inquiries as to the denizens of the headwaters of the stream, and exhibiting my strange paddles, asked if any knew whence they came. But all were wholly ignorant of their origin. Likewise, all were unanimous in declaring that the river rose in " a hole in a mountain," and that the country about the source was the abode of evil spirits or monsters, half-man and half-jaguar, which destroyed all human beings who entered their country. But above Great Falls I had better luck. Here the Indians were more primitive, more cleanly and less ruined by civilization. Among them I again heard the tale of white Indians and one old chief expressed the opinion that the paddles were those of the mysterious white tribe.

Then, at a remote Indian village we found a "spree" in progress. From far and near, the Indians had flocked to the merrymaking, bent only on having a good time and getting outrageously drunk. But they were still sober when I arrived, and in reply to my inquiries, declared that the paddles had come from farther "topside" from the "white" Indians, and that no man had ever penetrated their country, although occasionally a member of the mysterious race came down the river to trade, always vanishing into the unknown district where, so my informants averred, they were guarded by the half-human creatures who dwelt in a stone city on the mountain top whence the river issued from its "hole."

And then Fate or luck played into my hands. Suddenly I leaped up, hardly able to believe my eyes. Into the dancing circle had stepped a strange figure. He was short, pudgy and wrinkled; about his neck and across his naked torso hung strings of seeds and jaguar teeth; in one hand he carried a calabash rattle, gay with streamers of gaudy parrot feathers; upon his head was a gorgeous crown of macaw plumes with streamers of feathers hanging from it to his waist, and the form of the crown, the design of its decorations, stamped him instantly as a member of a tribe I had never seen.

But I scarcely noticed these details at the time. My eyes were fixed incredulously upon his face and body. His hair was gray, upon his good-natured grinning face was a straggling gray beard and mustache, and—his skin was white! Not that it was the white of a pure Caucasian. It was tanned and burnt by weather and sun, it was daubed with paint, and in every superficial character the man was an Indian. But there was no hint of brown, copper or yellow in his skin. Rather, it was that of a sunburned European and the old man's cheeks were as rosily pink as any Englishman's. Unquestionably, beyond the shadow of a doubt he was a "white Indian" if ever there was one and, pressing through the throng, I reached the old fellow's side. With some difficulty I managed to induce him to leave the dance for a time and, by means of Akawoia, gestures and the help of other Indians who had gathered about I questioned him. And as I talked I was even more astounded at the stranger's appearance. His eyes twinkled and instead of being dull black or deep brown they were light hazel; his features were more Caucasian than Indian, and without his headdress and barbaric ornaments he would have passed anywhere as a good-natured elderly Scotchman, or, if clad in wide trousers and blouse and with a peaked cap on his gray head, he would have been transformed into a typical easy-going old Dutchman.

I was elated beyond words. Incredible as it seemed, I was actually talking to a "white Indian" and my discovery confirmed my theory. I felt certain that he

*A Demerara Indian dressed for the sacred parasara dance.*

*An Akuria with dance trumpet up the Demerara River.*

*Kuna woman and child, Capotte River.*

was neither an Indian nor white, but that he was a living proof of my theory that the white Indians were descendants of Europeans and Indians. Conversation was not easy. The old fellow, moreover, was a bit loath to divulge any information regarding his tribe. His eyes lit up when I showed him the paddles; he admitted they were those of his people, and he informed me he was an Akuria. Presents, tobacco and a little coaxing soon established most friendly relations, however, and the fellow, waving his hand indefinitely toward the upper river, declared his people dwelt between the Demerara and the Berbice.

One village only was there, a settlement of less than one hundred individuals, and, so he informed me, it could be reached by a trail leading from a spot beside the stream which he minutely described. But the old fellow refused absolutely to accompany me and guide us. He had come a long distance to have a good time, he had no intention of missing the drinking bout at the end of the festivities, and the merry twinkle in his eyes and the wink he bestowed upon me as he said this were such as no true Indian ever knew or could accomplish.

If I was to follow up my discovery and visit the tribe, there was no time to be lost. We were woefully short of provisions and game was exceedingly scarce. So I left him, stripped of his regalia but gloriously happy in a pair of drill trousers and a calico shirt, to resume his merrymaking, and pressed on into the indefinite beyond.

Never have I experienced a more heartbreaking, terrible journey. The knife-sharp rocks, the tangled vines, the dense jungles of razor-edged saw-grass made traveling an endless agony.

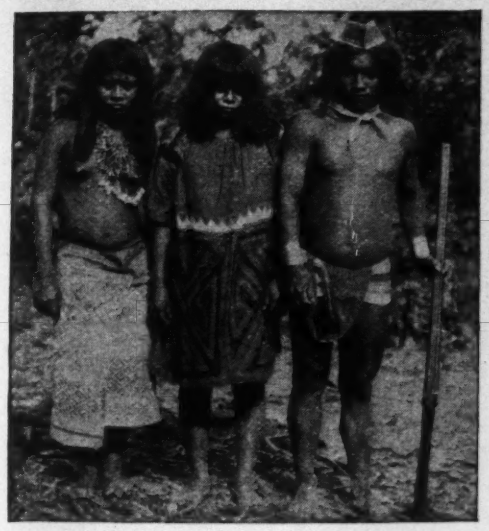
When at last we reached the end of nowhere and found our farther passage barred by a lofty, impassable mountain side, I no longer wondered at the tales of the river coming out from a "hole in the mountain" and of the stone city on the mountain top. The river did literally issue from holes—scores of them—great fissures and crevices among the rocks. And there, outlined against the heavy sodden clouds, or concealed by scudding vapor and a veil of rain, rose what I first took to be veritable stone buildings—massive fortresses and towers, tapering spires and castellated walls—but which were nothing more than the mountain's cap of sandstone, carved by the elements.

We had run the Demerara River to earth, but we had found no trace of the trail of the strange tribe I sought. There was nothing to do but retrace our steps and discouraged, utterly exhausted, we stumbled back through the wilderness. Then luck again favored us. One of my men, the Arekuna boy, seeking an easier route, came upon a landing place and we hurried to him at his shout. From the spot, a winding, half-obliterated trail led into the jungle, and forgetting our weary bodies and fever-racked bones, we hurried along the pathway. On and on it led; zigzagging, doubling, crossing streams, winding over hills, until at last I halted and declared that I believed we were on the wrong trail and were blindly following some game trail that led nowhere. The next instant we stood speechless, our ears straining. From far away, thin but unmistakable, had come the bark of a dog. Then, as the yelping was again borne to us, we forgot all else and raced onward, for where there are dogs in the bush there are Indians.

Again and again the welcome sound came to us, each time nearer than the last, and then, so suddenly and unexpectedly that we stopped short, we came into view of a clearing and, on the farther side, Indian houses! At our first glimpse of the thatched roofs we knew we had reached the Akuria village. High above the surrounding trees and shrubbery rose an immense conical-roofed house fully sixty feet in diameter and as many feet high, open at the sides under the eaves that reached to within a yard of the earth, while all about stood square huts.

As we stood gazing, figures appeared: short, naked men and women, little children and half-grown boys and girls and, to my delight, all of the same peculiar pinkish color as the old man at the dance. Only a fleeting glimpse did we have. No sooner did the denizens of the village catch sight of us than they vanished like ghosts, leaving the spot deserted save for the curs that nipped at our heels as we made our way to the great house. But the Indians had not gone far.

The men, a dozen of them, were seated



*Chokoi and Kuna; the skirt on the girl in the center shows Chinese influence.*

*Primitive Pirri Indians found by Mr. Verrill in the interior of Darien.*

*Chokoi wearing ceremonial crowns of painted wood and bamboo strips, just as described by Pringhouse, the Buccaneer, nearly three centuries ago.*

*The first "white Indian" I saw, an old Akuria, really might have passed for a good-natured Scot or an easy-going Dutchman.*

*An Akuria Indian with ceremonial mask.*

about on wooden stools or in cotton hammocks and they gazed at us, as we bent low and entered, with strange expressions of mingled fear, wonder and curiosity. I glanced about. The interior of the huge dwelling was divided into sections radiating from an open space in the center wherein a fire smouldered. I say divided, but properly there were no divisions or at least partitions, the sections being marked by upright posts, each carved and painted in grotesque conventionalized figures of animals or birds, which later I learned were the totems or insignia of the families occupying the house. In each of these sections dwelt a family and in the hammocks swung to the posts, the trembling females of the tribe were lying, wrapped like chrysalids in their cocoons. But the Akurias, though they had never seen white men or black, soon overcame their fears and shyness and, filled with intense curiosity, drew about us. Then as I distributed presents, we became good friends and space was made for our belongings and for swinging our hammocks. I had found the white Indians, was living among them, but—were they white or Indian?

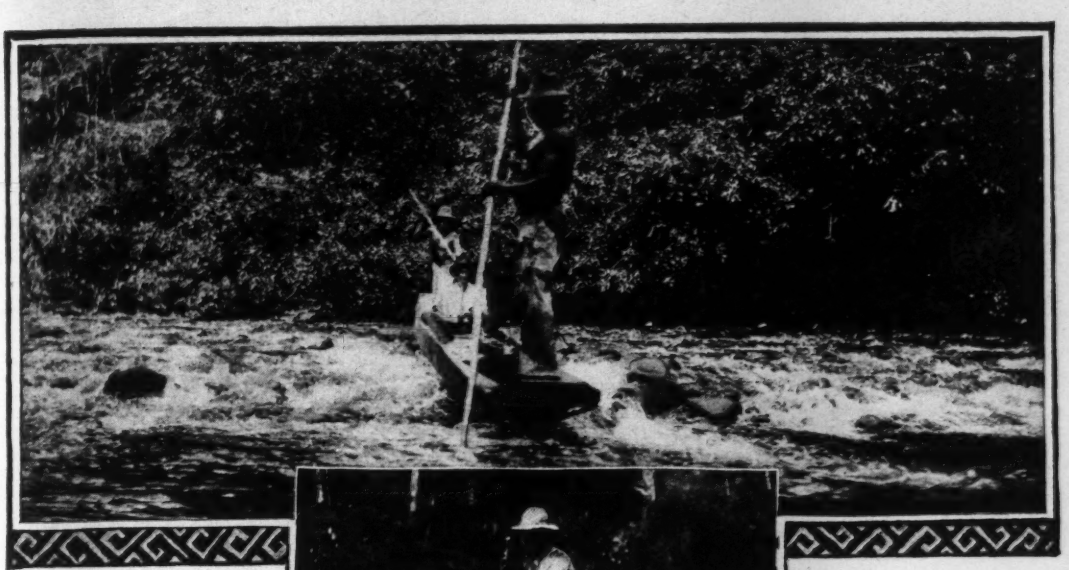
In language, habits, arts, every external and visible characteristic, with the exception of color, they were unquestionably Indian. But their skins, though by no means really white, were not the color of any Indian I had ever seen, and the darkest member of the tribe was lighter than the lightest colored Carib. Moreover, the oldest members had gray hair; many of the men had well-developed beards, and several had light gray eyes. The younger children were almost pure white—where not dirty—and several had brown hair, tow-colored at the ends. But the hair was coarse, straight and typically Indian; the features of both men and women varied from distinct Indian types to those strikingly Caucasian, and I was more than ever convinced that the Akurias were the descendants of some forgotten European expedition —Dutch or British or perhaps Spanish or French—that had been lost or cut off in the bush and had mixed with some Indian tribe.

All about the interior of the house were feather crowns, bows and arrows, baskets and fans; bead girdles and queyus and similar objects. All were distinct in pattern and design from those of any other tribe, and I soon discovered that the Akurias' customs were as unique as their handiwork. In many ways they were communistic, all dwelt together in the great house, all shared equally in the food from the fields and the game and fish obtained, and all worked together and equally at tilling their gardens and at other labors. But there the communistic idea ended. Ornaments, bows, hammocks, utensils were personal property, and the Akurias bartered among themselves, as though dwelling in widely separated villages instead of under a common roof.

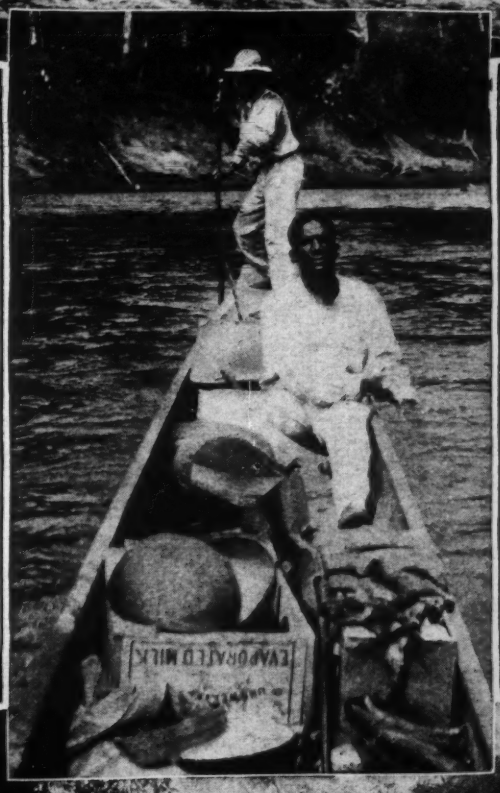
A few, I found, dwelt outside in the smaller huts—square, walled-in, two-storied buildings. These I learned were homes reserved for newly married couples, persons who were ill and women about to bear children, while the upper stories were used as storerooms for corn, rice and cassava meal. Although the Akurias had never seen a European or a negro—many had never seen an Indian of another tribe—yet they showed no astonishment at steel or iron tools or utensils. This did not surprise me. I knew that the Indians of the upper Demerara were in touch with them, that they traded with them and thus, through barter with near-by Indians, the Akurias had learned to use many articles of civilization though knowing nothing whatever of civilized man.

But many of the commonest articles of European make had never been seen in the village. Not one had ever seen soap or a mirror; thread, needles, pins, fish-hooks, files were absolutely new to them, and to my utter amazement I discovered they were wholly ignorant of salt! With wondering faces they tasted it, hesitated, made wry faces and showed every symptom of feeling nauseated. Of course they must have salt, no doubt obtaining enough for life and health from plants or other sources of food, but salt, as a separate thing, they had never seen.

One of the most striking things about them was their small size. Not a single man was over five feet four inches tall and many were barely five feet; the tallest woman was five feet one inch and the average height of the women was four feet six. And the women were, without exception, the ugliest females I



*Running the rapids on the Pukro River in the narrow dugout cayuca.*



*The author's cayuca going into the forbidden country up the Chuquenaque River.*

*The Demerara River had dwindled to a brook meandering through rocky country.*

have ever met. None of the Indian women in Guiana are beautiful but, beside the Akurias, an Akawoia, Arekuna or Macushi would be a veritable Venus. But the crowning surprise came the second day I was at the Akuria village.

I had questioned the men about the paddles, had secured several even more elaborately decorated than those which had led me on my search, and I asked, as well as I was able, how the circular designs were made. For a moment the old fellow with whom I was talking hesitated. Then he grinned, rose, took a battered but magnificently woven basket from its resting place on a timber overhead and lifted the lid. Poking about among its contents, a heterogeneous assortment of feathers, balls of cotton, small baskets, karamani wax and odds and ends, he drew out the most amazing thing I had seen—a pair of clumsy, ancient, hand-made iron dividers.

Where had they come from? How had these strange people obtained them? How old they were I could not say, but at the least a hundred years.

Carefully I put questions to the old fellow. His replies were sincere, evidently made with every intention of telling the truth, and yet were unquestionably ridiculous. Long ago, in the very beginning of things, he declared, the first Akuria had been given the dividers by the creator. There were two pairs, he said, and ever since, guarded as their greatest treasure, handed down from chief to son through generations, the magic things had been preserved. The incised designs of circles and semicircles were placed on everything as the tribal mark of the Akurias for no Indians but the Akurias possessed the power to make such patterns.

Very proudly he spoke of this; very carefully he restored the clumsy dividers to their place in the basket and to my own satisfaction at least I saw in the presence of the ancient instruments the key to the puzzle of the Akurias' white blood, the proof that they were a mixture of Indian and Caucasian. Sometime in the past—one hundred, two hundred years before—a Dutch expedition, perhaps seamen exploring some river, perhaps engineers bent on roughly surveying the country or making maps, had been stranded in the wilderness.

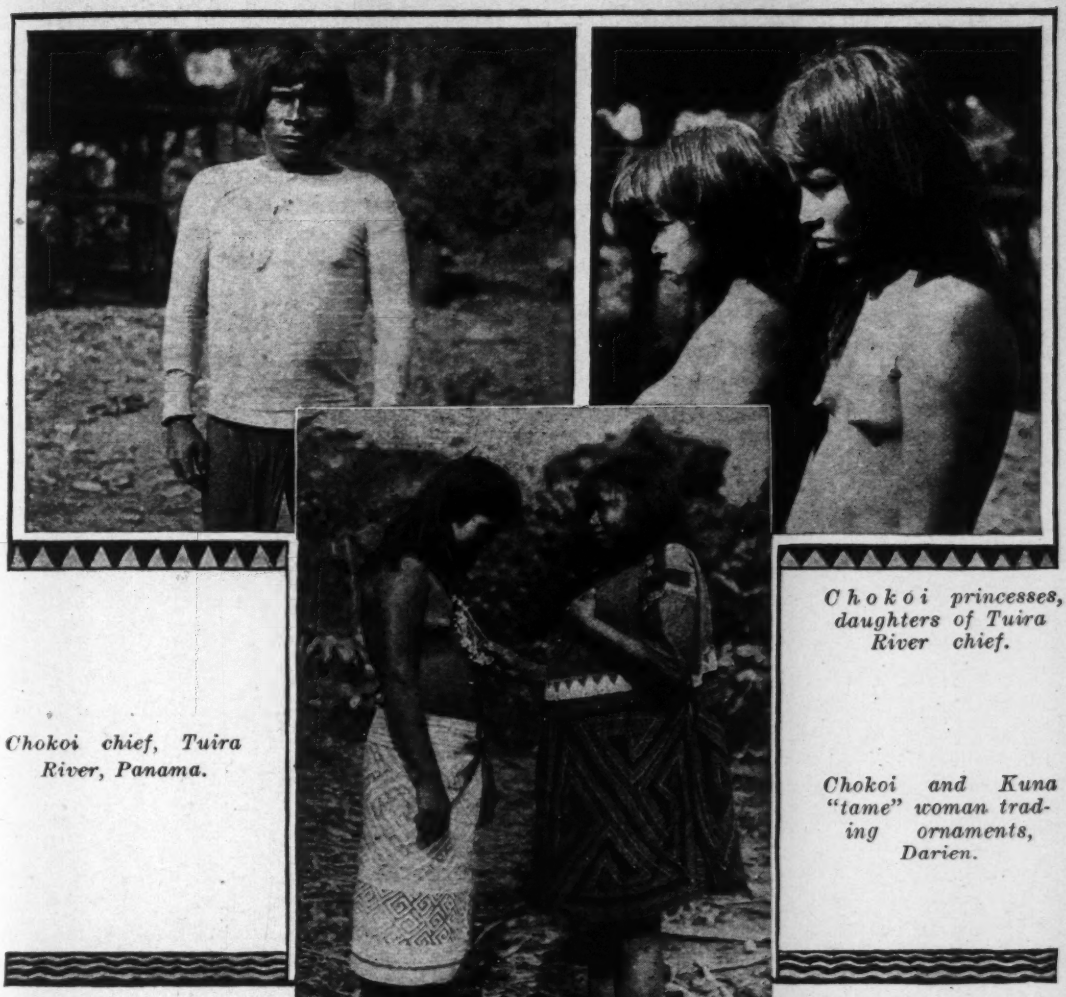
Among friendly Indians they had found a home, through years of primitive life, their arts, knowledge, tongue, all civilized things had been lost; the little isolated tribe had intermarried, the blood of the two races had blended, a new race had resulted, and, throughout the years, through all their wanderings, the people had preserved the compasses as talismans, sacred things connected in some vague, incomprehensible manner with their origin. Of all the European objects and attributes of civilization, of all the Dutch characteristics, only the ruddy cheeks, the light eyes, the humorous expressions and good-natured features, and the handwrought compasses remained to link the Akurias with the past. To all intents and purposes they *were* white Indians.

My second experience with white Indians was some years after my discovery of the Akurias, and many miles from Guiana. Many tales had been told me of the fierce, unknown, unconquered savage Kuna Indians of the forbidden district of Darien, in Panama. Within their territory—a vast area stretching from the headwaters of the Canazas River to the upper reaches of the Chuquenaque, no stranger was permitted. Many had tried to go in but, so the stories went, they had either never returned or had come forth mutilated or bearing tales of being driven from the country under pain of death. Government officials declared that one party of nearly one hundred Panamanians had attempted to enter the Kuna territory and only fifteen had returned alive, yet no Indian had been seen, the men having been shot from ambush with poisoned arrows.

All of this naturally whetted my desire to visit and study the savage Kunas, and I made up my mind to enter the forbidden district.

To reach Darien was easy enough though the trip in the filthy, ramshackle coastwise launch was far from pleasant, but once at the miserable Panamanian towns, squatting close to the shores of San Miguel Gulf and the coastal streams, I found that to penetrate to the interior would be no simple matter. To enter the Kuna country was, the natives declared, to sign their death warrants.

But even in Panama, there are certain adventurous fellows, perhaps men



*Chokoi princesses, daughters of Tuira River chief.*

*Chokoi chief, Tuira River, Panama.*

*Chokoi and Kuna "tame" woman trading ornaments, Darien.*

in whose veins flows a little of the blood of the dare-devil old buccaneers who under Sharpe crossed Darien centuries ago, and I found two such men. So with the two negroes and my West Indian black boy, Claude, I left the last outposts of so-called civilization behind and headed for the unknown. Our conveyance was a dugout cayuca, long and narrow, cranky as a floating log, and with the two extremities extending out in flat platform-like projections on which the men stood as they drove the craft up stream by means of poles—punting it, in fact.

Our way led up the Tuira River, for while no wild Kunas dwelt on that stream I had formulated a plan of action which I felt sure would result in getting us safely into the forbidden land. In brief, my idea was to visit the peaceful though primitive Chokois; from their villages proceed up the tributaries of the river to the villages of the "tame" Kunas, who I was told were scattered through the district, and then head for the wild Kuna country. By doing this I felt confident that my presence and my designs would be carried from tribe to tribe and would eventually reach the wild Kunas. Thus, knowing my expedition was peaceful and that I was after neither gold nor rubber, the Kunas might allow me to enter their country. And my plans fell out as I had hoped.

Once beyond the Membrillo River, we were in the "forbidden land." We had no knowledge of the location of the first

villages, but, feeling sure they would be on the tributaries rather than on the main river, I headed up a small quebrada above the Membrillo.

As we pushed along shore in the dusk, without the least warning we collided with a big canoe moored to the bank. At the same instant, shadowy figures sprang up about us. Our cayuca was seized and dragged ashore, and we found ourselves surrounded by Indians.

Not a single one made any move to seize or even touch us, yet all were armed with bows and arrows, and by means of gestures and a few words of Spanish, they made it quite plain that we were prisoners and were to follow them. With some in advance, others in our rear, we were marched through the jungle for a mile or more, and then, crossing a small brook, approached a group of houses. Here we were conducted to a large hut, and, by the flaring light of a fire, I saw our captors.

A hideous-looking lot they were. Each and every one was painted from head to foot in solid black, blue or scarlet with great rings of contrasting color about eyes and mouth, and on every painted, savage face was an unpleasantly hostile expression. That there was downright peril in our predicament I knew, and yet I could not help laughing aloud at the strange spectacle of a white man and three colored men sitting in a circle of savage Indians in absolute silence, as if awaiting some miracle to enable us to understand one another.

And presently the miracle arrived in the person of a huge, fat, but excessively pompous and dignified individual garbed in cotton shirt and breech-cloth and with a scarlet cotton cap surmounting the mass of hair looped to one side of his head. Unlike his fellows, he was not painted, with the exception of a red perpendicular line on his nose, but in his ears dangled heavy gold rings and a necklet of cowry shells and gold bangles hung upon his broad chest. For a few moments he looked us over as if we were some strange specimens, and then he addressed me in fairly good Spanish.

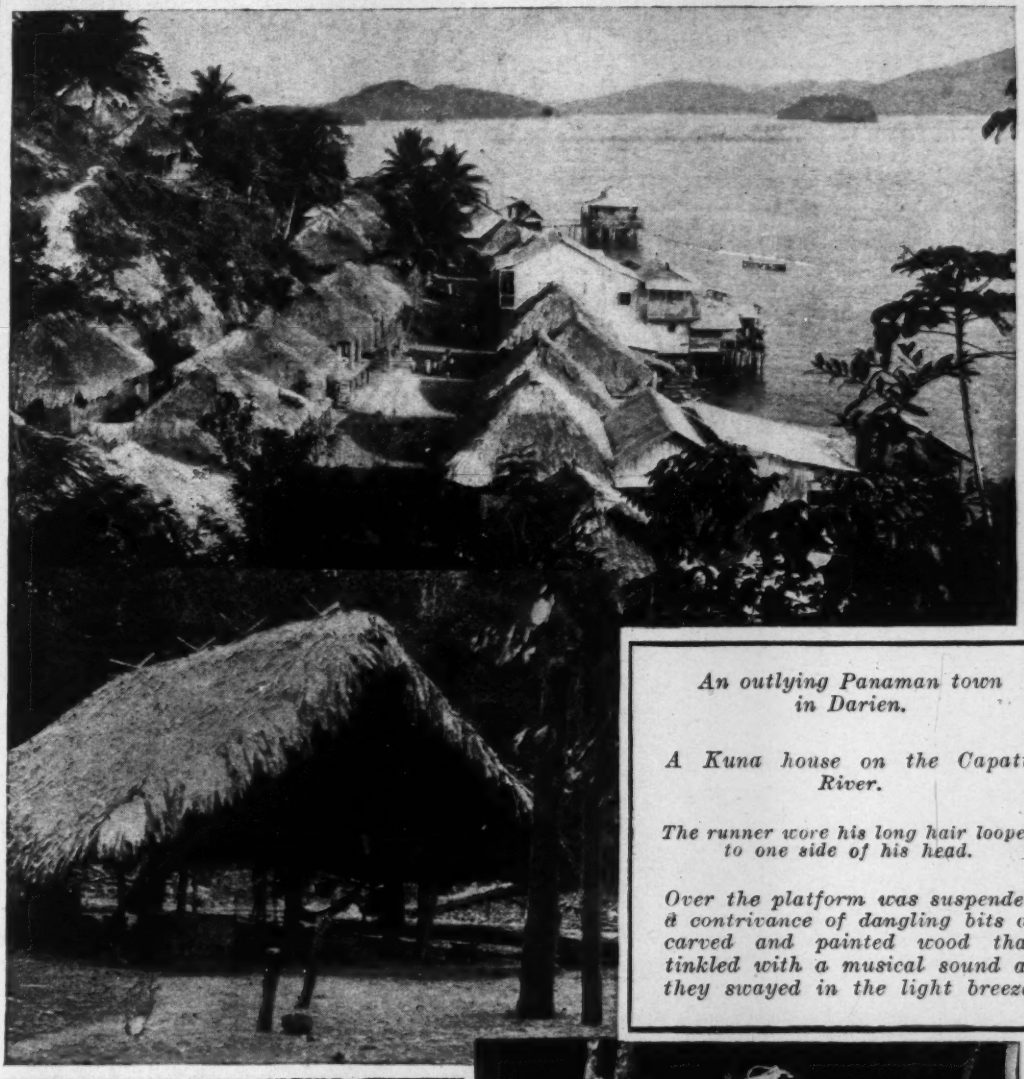
After cross-examining me as to my intentions, my reasons for entering his district, my nationality and my past, present and future and making similar inquiries regarding my men, he turned and spoke to the assembled Indians. At length, after a long and somewhat heated discussion, of which of course I could understand not a word, the chief, as he turned out to be, quite unexpectedly demanded my pictures of the Guiana Indians. I had been right—word of my coming and all I had said and done among the tame Kunas had been reported. As I handed the photographs to the chief, his fellows gathered about, examining them, exclaiming over them, as excited and delighted as a crowd of boys.

It was laughable to see them hold the pictures upside down, yell with surprise, and then peer half fearfully at the back of them and utter ejaculations of wonder when they found them blank.

Once more the old chief spoke to his tribesmen, and, as well as I could judge from his tones and gestures, argued in our favor. There appeared to be less opposition to the old fellow's arguments than before. But one fellow—a villainous-looking chap I thought him, too, with small roving eyes, thin cruel lips and hawk nose—rose and addressed the others in vehement tones. That he was utterly opposed to whatever the chief had said I well knew, and I surmised that the whole controversy had a direct and very important bearing on our case.

However, even in a Kuna council, the majority wins, and despite the eloquence of the lone opponent, who glared at me with a demoniacal leer as he ceased speaking and seated himself, the chief had his way. Quite as pompously as ever, he informed me that I would be permitted to remain in the district "half a moon." But, added the chief, there were certain conditions affixed to the verbal permit: I was held responsible for my men who were to be confined to the immediate vicinity of the house; I was forbidden to go about unless accompanied by Kunas; I was not to approach or enter the ladies' quarters, nor was I to take any photographs.

Later, I learned that their only objection to being photographed was their belief that in the pictures they would appear as nude as the Guiana Indians. So I showed the Kunas photographs of myself fully clad and, thus convinced that nudity was not a necessity in the magic, the men, and even the chief himself, posed for me. Not until I lined them up and used my camera did I re-

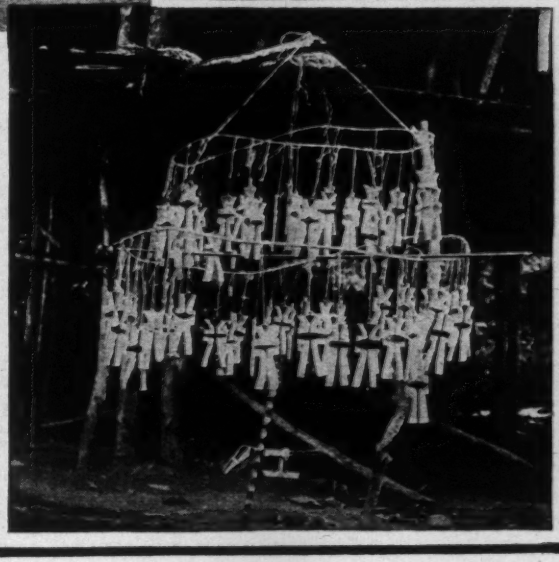


*An outlying Panaman town in Darien.*

*A Kuna house on the Capatti River.*

*The runner wore his long hair looped to one side of his head.*

*Over the platform was suspended a contrivance of dangling bits of carved and painted wood that tinkled with a musical sound as they swayed in the light breeze.*



alize that I might have taken photographs *ad libitum* without the least danger, for not one had an idea that the camera was the means to the end.

Of course I made inquiries about the white Indians. Every one knew of them. In fact the chief gravely informed me there was one at another village less than a half day's walk distant, and if I cared to accompany him, he would show the fellow to me. Highly elated, I jumped at the chance for I felt that at last I was about to look upon a really white Indian. But after a terrible tramp judge of my utter chagrin and disappointment when the "white" Indian proved to be a blind and helpless old Kuna, in fact a relative of the chief, and an excellent example of almost complete albinism! Yes, he was most truly and literally a "white" Indian—skin and hair as white as snow and sightless eyes as pink as an albino rabbit's but he was not by any means the kind I sought.

The wild Kunas were, however, far nearer white than either the tame Kunas or any other real Indians I have ever visited and long before I bade good-by to them I had come to the conclusion that if a white tribe existed in Darien it would prove to be, like the Akurias of Guiana, a mixture of the pale-skinned Kunas and white men lost in the jungle.

According to the chief, there were approximately five thousand of the wild Kunas in the forbidden area, but the villages are widely separated and my restricted stay of half a month was far too fully occupied with making notes and studying the habits, language and customs of the villagers to permit me to make a tour of the district. That the Kunas are of almost pure Mongolian ancestry I was convinced; their language is strongly Chinese, their features thoroughly Mongolian; the odd custume worn by their women is strikingly like that of the women of China in pattern, and they use wooden pillows very similar to those in Japan.

Interesting as these observations were, I seemed doomed to disappointment in another respect, for try as I might, I was unable to induce the Kunas to sell or trade a single weapon, ornament or other article for my collection. This was all the harder to bear as I was surrounded by objects of the greatest scientific and archæological value, specimens of which no museum in the world could boast. But I had still one card up my sleeve. As a rule, a gift to an Indian requires, by strictest etiquette, a gift in return, and the day before I left I decided to play my last card.

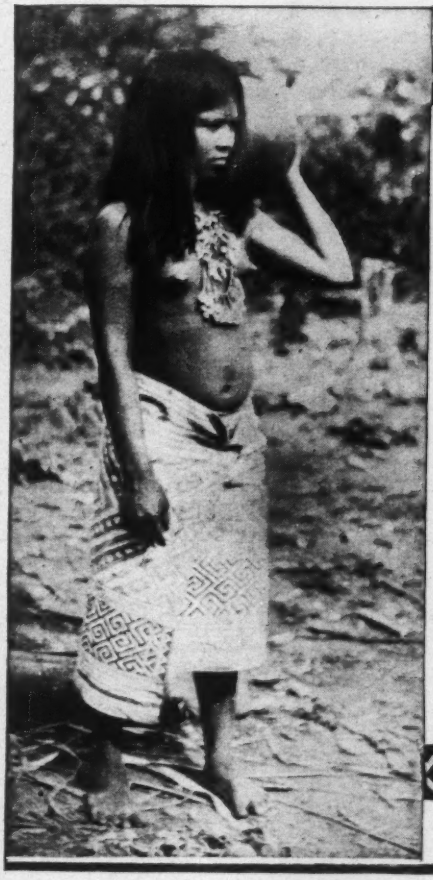
Summoning the men of the village to the chief's house, I distributed everything I owned among them until at last I was reduced to the barest necessities and the clothes on my back. Quite impassively the Kunas received the presents and without comments departed to their homes. I gave up. Evidently the Kunas had unique customs.

But the next morning, as we packed the cayuca in preparation for leaving, the old chief brought out a bundle of bows and arrows, a roll of beautiful Kuna cloth, a huge drum and a gorgeous woman's dress which he presented to me with a grunt. Hardly had I thanked him, when another man arrived laden with a hammock, a blow-gun, several musical instruments and a carved stool. Then, for the next half hour, I was kept busy accepting gifts pressed upon me, until every article I had coveted, admired or attempted to secure was in the pile of presents which had accumulated.

Then, just as I thought the last had arrived, the cruel-lipped rascal who had been disposed to slice off the soles of my feet upon my arrival, appeared on the scene. With a murderous leer which he no doubt intended for an ingratiating smile, he handed me a magnificent basket. Within was a woman's dress, a number of cowry shell necklaces, several carved calabashes, three of the odd palm-wood combs, and a carved club.

All his former animosity was forgotten, and as I tried, with the few Kuna words I had learned, to express my thanks, he fumbled in his nether garments, which the day before had been my own. With a ludicrous expression of shyness upon his broad yellow face, he handed me a tiny exquisitely carved god of lignumvitæ with eyes of uncut peridots. It was his personal fetich, his most highly prized possession, the greatest pledge of friendship he could bestow. No longer was the fellow an enemy. He was now a steadfast, lifelong friend, and as I waved farewell, and the cayuca slipped down the stream, I realized that henceforth to me the Kuna country was no longer a "forbidden land."

*The house of the Chokoi chief, Darien.*



*A Chokoi girl.*

*Two little savages.*

*There sat Johnnie, the tea bottle tucked under his arm, in the old familiar pose.*

# JOHNNIE

*By* H. MORTIMER BATTEN

*Illustrated by Carton Moorepark*

IT WAS in the Rainy River country, just after the passing of a bush fire, that the two forest rangers found the black bear cub, and since the little creature was motherless and starving, they conveyed him in their canoe out of the blackened area to unburnt country. "Johnnie" was just about old enough to fend for himself in the green bush, so they put him ashore and paddled off without him.

"Look at the poor little devil!" remarked Don Donally as they gained midstream, for little Johnnie sat on end at the water's edge just where they had left him, his paws folded resignedly across his chest, watching them with such pathetic pleading that Don's heart was touched. The other man grunted but said nothing. A man of few words was Peter Nodman, but when presently the cub set up a caterwaul of misery he replied to his companion's suggestive glance.

"What's the use?" said Peter. "We don't want him tagging about with us all summer."

So they pushed on, but little Johnnie followed, falling over the rocks, tumbling head first into the hollows, but following nevertheless. His gaze was still fixed upon them, he still whined and caterwauled, for having lost his dear mother he was anxious not to lose these two-legged foster parents who had fed him on cold tea, damp biscuits and leathery buckwheat pancakes.

Soon a wide slough barred Johnnie's progress, but unhesitatingly he plunged in and struck out straight for the canoe, which was traveling slowly against the current.

"Got grit, anyway!" observed Peter Nodman, glancing over his shoulder to where the little black wedge of Johnnie's nose clove the surface.

Don Donally nodded. Presently, reversing his paddle he remarked:

"We'll have to pick him up or he'll drown."

So they went back and pulled the little creature in, at which Johnnie closely hugged Peter's knee. But Peter was obdurate, and steered for the opposite shore.

"It's all very well, Don," said he, arguing with himself as much as with his partner, "but it's a miserable shame to make a pet of a cub. What happens when he grows old and nobody wants him? Ain't you and me seen scores of the mangy beasts chained up outside trading posts and gin mills?"

"All right," replied Don. "I'm not arguing with you, Peter, and we'd best put him ashore again. But it kind of hits you where you live to see how badly

he wants to be with us."

So once more little Johnnie was dumped down on the sandy margin, but for two hours he steadily followed them, bumping his nose dozens of times, falling spread eagle on his throat, till eventually he was too tired to follow farther. So the two bronze-faced guardians of the woods pushed on, gloomily silent, till the purple of evening closed about them. Choosing an open patch breeze-swept of flies, they made their primitive camp and frizzled their buckwheat and bacon. Then they threw down brushwood, and drew the big crimson blanket about them.

Sleep came like the pressure of a hand, sleep born of toil and sunshine and the balsam-laden breezes, but ere the dawn rose, blushing sweet and new across the azure majesty of the forest, Peter was wakened by the bear cub falling over his face. He cursed sleepily, but forthwith the little creature proceeded to dig itself in, nosing under the man's body, and because it was too much trouble to argue the point Peter allowed him to remain.

The cub slept without stirring for the remainder of the night, as indeed he deserved to sleep, having so persistently followed and so cleverly nosed them out. Thereafter there was no talk of putting him ashore. And when they pushed off on their life-long mission through the woods, the cub, carrying a bone, planted himself with an air of permanency in the waist of the canoe, growling his defiant baby thunder at Peter.

"Ah, well," said the ranger, "if you don't succeed in life, sonny, it ain't your fault!"

Thus having thrust himself upon man's keeping, little Johnnie soon fell in with the routine of camp life. Whether on the trail or at their central cabin at Lake Kippora, Johnnie was entirely at home. The two young rangers had an immense area to patrol, but in spite of its early fires which had kept them on the move the season was to prove an unusually uneventful one.

A day or two after Johnnie's arrival they regained Kippora, where they could live in comfort and plenty such time as the Fire Fiend permitted. The cabin stood on high ground, overlooking the International Boundary, and behind it was a mighty outcrop of granite rising to a considerable altitude above the tree tops. This was their lookout station or watch tower. Several times each day one or other of them would mount it to scan the vast horizon fading into purple haze on every side. So immense was the expanse that often they saw fires raging many miles out of their territory, the boundaries of which nevertheless lay a distance of some days' hard traveling.

Little Johnnie loved climbing the outcrop and never failed to accompany his friends when they made the trip. There on the skyline, as the man searched the solitudes, he would sit bolt upright similarly searching. It was on one of these occasions that he first noticed the fleeting sunlit clouds straight overhead and his excitement was immense. He stood

up on his hind legs and reached his paws for them, he stretched out his long tongue to its furthest limits and tried to lick them, he watched and reached and admired till their movement made him giddy, and every time he stood up, still staring heavenward, he fell over flop and rolled like a barrel.

On the whole, Johnnie was a good and friendly little soul, and so amusing were his ways that the two men became much attached to him. At first he would steal anything he could get hold of, but Don was slowly breaking him to a respect of household rules, and the little animal at any rate possessed the gift of profiting by experience. Only once did he try to eat the soap, only once did he cuff the kettle when it hissed at him, and only one of Peter's moccasins did he devour. For Peter leathered him with the other till the very sight of such an article of raiment sent him scuttling under the cabin.

Peter always made a point of alluding to the cub as his partner's pet, especially when Johnnie had done anything wrong, and this annoyed Don.

"Who was it took him under the blanket?" Don would inquire, yet Peter stubbornly disowned the little fellow. Indeed he was a trifle antagonistic toward Johnnie, and ere long Johnnie seemed to become aware of it. Almost daily he damaged something and invariably that something belonged to Peter. The crisis was reached when one evening Johnnie solemnly and deliberately capsized a large jar of melted resin Peter had collected at much pains for repairing a leak in the canoe.

"You little varmint!" yelled Peter. "I'll make you smart for that!"

He took up a stick and approached the cub, whereupon Johnnie, who always made a rule of howling before he was hurt, ran for the nearest tree and sat twelve feet up, still howling. Peter went over deliberately, intent on shaking him out, but the minute he was under the tree, Johnnie loosened his hold and dropped. He dropped straight on Peter's head with a force which sent the man spinning, and, looking up dazedly, Peter saw his intended victim fleeing for a second tree, howling all the way.

So Johnnie did not get his whacking, while his would-be persecutor suffered from a very sore neck for several days.

In their leisure moments the two taught little Johnnie many amusing tricks, one of which consisted of drinking cold tea out of a bottle while they had their meals. He became quite adept at this, sitting solemnly beside them with his bottle and taking an occasional pull. True, he spilt as much over his face as he drank, but that troubled no one, and the men seemed to derive additional amusement from the fact that the bottle bore a red label bearing the name of a famous Highland brand — till Johnnie sucked the label off.

Sometimes the sundown visit to the lookout station resulted in both men packing off to some more or less distant quarter of the woods, having noticed smoke rising skyward. Always they took the cub with them, and as a rule all they found at the other end was a family of Indians, squatting over their stew pot. These they would solemnly remind to guard their fires, mentioning the dread penalties which befall those who omit such caution.

It was while returning from one of these trips that, in the dead of night, they heard a fast gasoline launch run into one of the sloughs. Their ears told them that it had come from across the International Boundary. Their training prompted the certainty that here was one of those systematic gangs which earn a remunerative livelihood by poaching fish from Canadian waters. The two men were unarmed, but their courage did not waver, for they had waited for and dreamed of such a chance for many uneventful days. So, silently and swiftly they followed. They saw the poachers, four in number, place their charges of dynamite. Ere the fuses could be ignited, the birchbark shot forth from the shadows of the cedars and the two rangers leaped aboard the launch.

The poachers at once surrendered, holding up their hands, but a shout from Don warned Peter to look behind him. At the same instant both men were attacked, and Don saw the ruffian behind his partner raise his hand to strike Peter over the head with a spanner.

So ill chance, which is ever a part of the fortunes of war, might have seen the two that night weighted and sunk, but that the unexpected happened. For the blackguard with a spanner suddenly uttered a howl and clutched his ankle.

*His excitement was immense. He reached his paws for the fleeting sunlit clouds and, still staring heavenward, fell over flop.*

The blow never fell, for little Johnnie, unseen, forgotten, had also boarded the launch and realizing in some subtle way that these were foes, he had bitten the nearest of them through the ankle.

There was a scrimmage, but the two rangers, having moral support behind them, very soon cleared the air by the effective process of knocking their antagonists, one by one, overboard. This done they started up the launch, thus effectively confiscating the property of the poachers, whom they left with their own canoe as a means of transport.

It remained for the poachers to put in an appearance at the rangers' quar-

ters to reclaim their property, which would have been safely returned to them after the case had been tried, but evidently their courage failed, for Peter and Don, having acquired a supply of oil and petrol, used the launch on their rounds during the remainder of their stay in the woods. And this was just as well, for already Johnnie had grown too big and heavy for the canoe.

The cub had doubtless saved the situation and in all probability the lives, of his human friends, but he had not escaped unscathed. He lay still in the launch till they arrived at home, when he made no attempt to follow them up the bluff, and examination showed that he was suffering from a broken bone in his shoulder. Peter is was who set the bone, Peter it was who, for many nights, patiently and punctually, fed the cub from a spoon when he would not eat otherwise, and so Johnnie recovered and was soon himself again.

One day the two men were called upon to pay the penalty for one of the parlor tricks they had taught the cub. They had to make a long portage over the height of land, and the heat being intense and their load heavy, the task was by no means an easy one. A fog of black flies and mosquitoes rose from every bush they touched, alighting on each exposed part of the men's bodies, while heavily laden as they were there was no fighting off the insects.

Half of their load they carried to the top of the ridge, then dumping it down they returned for the second half. Johnnie, however, being a wise little bear, settled himself among the packs, and gave them to understand that he would remain there till they came back.

So, down the slope they headed, to toil back, sagging under their loads.

"Thank goodness we've got that cold tea!" exclaimed Don, as they neared the summit. "Lor', I could drink the Carribean Sea!"

Next minute they hove in view of their belongings, whereupon they stood and stared in mute consternation. For there sat Johnnie, the tea bottle tucked under his arm in the old familiar pose, and as they watched he up-ended the bottle to his lips, and sucked noisily at the unyielding neck.

It was evident now why Johnnie had chosen to guard the packs!

Some time later Peter said, almost sadly: "We'll be packing out in another month or so, Don, and it's time this cub learned to find his own grub. We mustn't feed him."

They did not feed him, thereafter, but being men of the woods, full of the infinite understanding of that blue and silent world which was their lot in life, they taught him to feed himself. When Peter passed a dead tree he called Johnnie to him, and stripping off the bark he revealed the clustered insect life below. When Don saw a rotten log he rolled it over, and left Johnnie to nose out the slugs curled up beneath it. They took him to the dry and sun-scorched places, where the ant millions scurried under the stones, they led him along the rocky shores, where the dead whitefish sometimes lay in ridges.

So from them he learned the lessons which his mother, had she lived, would have taught him. And Johnnie, coming to rejoice in his own hunting, learned by degrees to depend upon them less and less, while his coat took on a husky roughness, and into his eyes came a new light. Slowly but surely the wild soul was awakening in Johnnie, slowly but surely the artificial pet was becoming a thing of the past.

One autumn day, when the wonderful tints were creeping in along the forest edges, the three were traveling at some distance from home. During the course of the morning, Johnnie, now a big strong bear, seemed reluctant to follow. Repeatedly Don called to him, but when presently they had to cross a creek by a windfall which lay from bank to bank, Johnnie sat up on the near bank and made no attempt to follow. They looked back at him and he looked at them. He whined and glanced behind him toward the great gray slopes, and again he looked at them and whined.

"Don't call him, Don," said Peter. "Leave him to follow his own inclination. Come on."

And on they went, while Johnnie sat and looked at them, stooping to watch them round the bend. Then as they peered through the trees they saw him at length prowl off into the shadowy thickets. And they knew that if ever they met again it would be but as distant acquaintances or perhaps as foes.

Indeed they did see him again a fort-

night later, or thought they did, a solitary figure searching the shores of Lake Kippora for stranded fish, but when they shouted his name he looked at them for a time wistfully, then sauntered off into the shadows.

The following spring the lumber people got busy and built a long bunkhouse by the forest rangers' cabin. Also they built a cookhouse and all the other erections necessary for the working of a lumber camp. Later in the season machinery was brought along, and a little later still the men came.

The wild bear is notoriously a nomad, especially the young bear with no appointed home range, and for long Johnnie wandered as an Ishmael of the wilderness. When the snows fell and his food became scarce, he hollowed out a bed for himself deep in a drift, and there in his icy couch he slept for many weeks. Overhead the hungry hunted and the blizzards raged, while the big white moon shone down on a white and sunless world, while twenty, thirty feet the snows drifted over him, only a tiny air shaft connecting his ice-encrusted chamber with the world without. When at length Johnnie awoke and broke from his prison, the first kiss of spring was upon the land and a thousand tiny rivulets were flowing down the hollows under the snow.

Many things Johnnie learned that summer. He learned the peril of the Indian deadfall trap, the deadly spring of the jump snare, but it was not until he felt the sting of a rifle bullet that he began to associate these things with the trail of the moose-hide moccasin. Bit by bit, putting two and two together, this knowledge came to him, and he grew to understand that those who once had been his friends were to-day his deadliest foes. The why and the wherefore of it he did not reason out; he did not even glean the fact that there were more than two men in the world. To him man was man, and the scent of him was evil in Johnnie's nostrils, so that very timid he became, a creature of the night, given to shadowy pathways.

That autumn found Johnnie running in double harness. He mated with a she bear of his own age, but when the snows came she drove him off and secretly betook herself to her icy couch. There in the profound silence, deep in the drifts, her cubs would be born, as their fathers and mothers had been born before them for a thousand ages past, and there in the darkness she would nurse them till the spring called her to pursue her lifelong wanderings.

But Johnnie did not den up that winter. Lonely after his mate's departure, he roamed the desolate whiteness, roaring from range to range, always hungry, always searching. For days no food came to him, but starvation seemed only to quicken the wiry indefatigableness of his limbs, and so the hunting wolves struck his trail.

At first only a small pack, and turning at bay he scattered them and plunged on. But soon the knowledge came to him that they were following him again, and lurking in hiding he bore down upon them once more, and crash, thud, slash went his terrible forepaws. Again they retired, and again Johnnie plunged on, in search of hiding now, though for once the great woods held on shelter. Next day the wolves came up to him again, following in silence, and so for many days they followed, dashing in to slash his hindlegs whenever an opening occurred. Through that living nightmare Johnnie somehow lived, till in the end he would have faced fire and water, yes even man himself, to have left behind those gray devils of his moonlit world.

Then one day, in familiar territory now, Johnnie, staggering and bloody, heard a sound which awoke old memories — the ringing of an axe. Overhead the aurora flamed in a million colored lights, but all around the steely friendlessness of winter shone. The wolves also heard and the sound seemed to spread a new unrest among them, so that they made to close upon him.

Then Johnnie rose — terrible and forbidding in the attitude of the fighting bear. Like the spokes of a cable hoist his great arms whirled in a last desperate bid for life, and again the air was filled with spinning, bristling bodies which smote the branches and crashed back into the snow. Then Johnnie rose, and again plunged on, heading now in the direction of that familiar sound.

It was Christmas. The cook and the cookee at Kippora Lumber Camp were

splitting logs for the furnace, the men were idling about the clearing, the captain and the engineer sat at the door of the cookhouse with a bottle on the bench between them.

Suddenly there was a shout from down the clearing, then shout after shout and the sound of hurrying feet in all directions. Some of the men were laughing as they wallowed through the drifts; others, chiefly the foreign element, were clearly panic-stricken. Most of them headed for the bunkhouse, but some burst in upon the captain and the engineer, crying out that a "grizzly" was charging them.

Certainly it had looked as if Johnnie were intent on mischief, for he bore down at full speed into the center of a party of men, who, very naturally, scattered like chaff. The engineer, uttering an oath, ran to the door, but only to be knocked down as a huge fur-clad body collided with his legs, and next moment Johnnie was huddled in a corner of the cookhouse.

The men who already occupied the place sought sanctuary among the rafters, shouting for some one to bring a gun. But the only man who possessed a gun was the captain, and it was safely locked up in his trunk. Under the circumstances, therefore, the best thing to do was to remain quietly where they were till the brute cooled down and went out of his own accord; so, having shouted instructions to this effect, the captain was among the most able in carrying them into effect.

For ten minutes Johnnie lay still in a corner hiding his head among a heap of larigans and breathing heavily, then realizing that he was at any rate free from the wolves, he began to recover some of his lost interest in life. He looked up at the men in the rafters. They also were out of the way, and bit by bit his man-made surroundings roused old interests. He nosed about the cook's bunk, and was in the act of climbing in for a rest, for he was deadly weary, when he caught sight of the bottle at the end of the table.

Cold tea! Just what he was wanting. A bottle of cold tea! Standing on his hind legs Johnnie waddled round to it, took the bottle in his forepaws and capsized it into his mouth.

"Blow me tight if it ain't a tame bear!" exclaimed a muffled voice above.

The first draft caused Johnnie to choke, but he persisted. Strong tea, no doubt, but tea, nevertheless, for it was contained in a bottle bearing a conspicuous red label! He tried again, and got down another gulp. Tears streamed from his eyes, his breath came in gasps, but there was something strangely fascinating about that tea. He tried again, having some difficulty in finding his mouth this time, and — yet another gulp ere the bottle was empty.

The reek of the fluid filled the whole spacious cabin and Johnnie had begun to wear a somewhat rakish look. He held up the bottle and peered into the neck with one eye to make sure it was empty, an old trick of his. Then, for no visible reason, he overbalanced backward, the bottle broke, and there came a sound of mirth from among the rafters.

Having sorted himself out, Johnnie decided to go to bed in the cooks' crimson blanket, which was about the best thing he could have done under the circumstances. So he climbed unsteadily into the bunk, which promptly collapsed with a loud rending of timber, but Johnnie was quite unconscious of the catastrophe. For ere he smote the floor he was sound asleep.

So they climbed down, and the captain, having announced that Johnnie was as drunk as a September hornet, went on with his summing up of the case.

"Poor devil," he said. "Evidently a pet bear, got loose from somewhere and been hunted by the wolves. That was why he came here. He wasn't attacking us, he was just trying to hide. Now he's drunk the blooming hootch!"

A dozen pairs of hands hauled Johnnie out and a dozen shovels dug a deep hole for him in a drift some little distance from the buildings. Into the hole they rolled Johnnie, still sleeping blissfully, and on top of him they shoveled the snow as they would have buried a corpse.

"There," said the captain. "He'll sleep till spring if he don't wake before."

Johnnie did sleep till spring. Or at any rate it was a fine spring morning when one of the boys announced that he had seen Johnnie drag himself out of the drift and stagger down to the river, where he stood and drank and lapped and sucked for fully twenty minutes.

# THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER

## *Does It Get Weighed? or Yet Wade?*

*By* MARION HILL

*Decorations by G. H. Mitchell*

A FEW nights ago, at a home dinner party, one gentleman present, having occasion to quote a few lines of "America," bungled amazingly, as is usual in such attempts, and had finally to desist through ignorance. Seeking for help among his fellows, he found that they, too, knew but little more of the song than the opening lines. Amidst the comments aroused by this not unprecedented incident, the host's ten-year-old daughter volunteered to help the big folks out, and did so by reciting all the verses correctly. In response to flattering questions, she said that she had been taught the song at school. With pardonable pride she added, "I will write it for you, if you like."

Of course we liked, and we furnished her with quieting paper and pencil; and then straightway began to forget her in our vigorous volleys of praise anent the whole-heartedness of public-school education. But she again brought herself to notice by presenting us shortly with the following interesting lines, very prettily written and neatly punctuated and, as may be seen, intelligently titled and put into verse form:

"America

My country, tissuf the
Sweet land of libaet tea,
Of thee I sing.
Land where my father died,
Land where the Pilgrims pried,
From ev'ry mountain side,
Let fridmen ring.

My native country the
Land of the noble free,
Thy name I love.
I love thy rots and chills,
Thy woods and temper pills,
My heart with ratcher thrills
Like that above."

Mingled with our amusement was consternation, for this little girl was not only more than ordinarily intelligent, she was also a remarkably good speller. When she wrote, "rots and chills," she most certainly meant nothing less than the indicated putrefactions and ague.

In connection with what follows, this point of spelling is an important one to note. Had the child been stupid and backward, her rendering of My Country would have been no menace to patriotism, for when a little American bubbles over in hymns to liberty, and means liberty even while writing "libaet tea," the moral exaltation is not impaired in the least; but this child knew enough to spell liberty correctly, had she wanted to use the word. It behooved us, then, to find out what on earth she did mean; so to that end we questioned her. In giving her replies, we call attention to their unfailing intelligence even where she was most at fault.

"What is 'libaet tea'?"

"One of our imports, I guess, from China."

"And what is 'tissuf'?"

"I don't know."

"What do you think it is?"

"Maybe it is to fill out the line. Poetry has something that is called meter; maybe 'tissuf' makes the right meter."

"What do you mean by 'pried'?"

"Why, pry means to come where you are not asked to come." This with a tinge of pity for the ignorance that could ask such a question.

"Then the Pilgrims pried into America?"

"Yes, I think so. Nobody invited them."

"What is 'fridmen'?"

"I don't know. I have thought that over, and can't make any sense to it."

"Why do you love 'rots and chills'?"

"I don't."

"But you say here that you do."

"Oh, I don't say it; it's the poetry says that."

"Well, what does the poetry mean?"

"I think it means that we must forgive a great many unpleasant things about our country, and say we like them just out of politeness."

"What are 'temper pills'?"

"Pills for temper, don't you think?"

"Did you ever see any such pills?"

"No. Did you? But I'd like to have some."

"Why?"

No answer to this except a half-shy, half-wicked little smile.

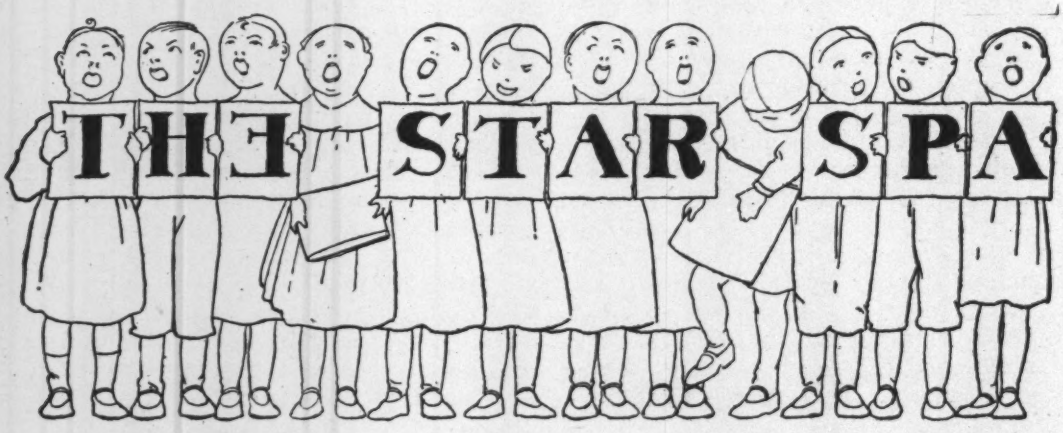
"What is 'ratcher'?"

"It sounds like a disease."

"How so?"

"It says, 'like that above'—and there are chills a few lines above; and thrills are a short of chills anyhow. I looked it up in my dictionary."

"This is truly wonderful!" we gasped; and as a reward for the tribute we were invited to attend her school on the morrow, because it would be "patri-



otic Friday," and we could hear them "speak pieces, sing war songs, salute the flag, and talk patriotic things."

Her invitation was too rich in suggestion to resist entirely and we did visit a school on the "patriotic" morrow; but deciding that her school had already spoken for itself, we visited another.

A class of about fifty clean, bright-eyed, wriggling boys and girls appeared perfectly charmed at being asked to perform their patriotic exercises, and executed them with a vim and thoroughness very creditable to themselves and to their teacher. They sang as many as a dozen patriotic songs; they knew more about Grant, Dewey and Pershing than those heroes knew themselves; they recited more historical facts about George Washington than could be beguiled out of an ordinary man at the point of a pistol—one little girl essayed the life of Theodore Roosevelt, but being unable to keep the lightning-rod and electricity and a kite out of her narrative, sat down bathed in tears—they gave quotations in prose and poetry inculcating love of country; and, with especial ardor, they united in a pretty ceremony which they called "S'lutin' the Flag." The teacher conducted this salute by successive taps of her handbell. Tap one, and a curly-haired lassie mounted the platform and unfurled Old Glory; tap two, and the entire class sprang to their feet as one child; tap three, and every hand made a military salute to the accompaniment of the rousing words, "We give our heads and our hearts to our country. One country, one language, one flag!" At the final word every little right hand was raised, the forefinger pointing to the Stars and Stripes. This statuesque pose was sustained until a last tap relaxed the tense muscles and gave signal for the little ones to drop back into their seats. It brought a choke into the throat to see it.

But the demon of investigation was abroad and refused to be throttled by sentiment. "Children, this has been very interesting; so interesting that I want to ask you some questions about it. For instance, you say that you give your heads to your country; now will one of you tell me how you do that?"

Not immediately. Smiles faded and a pall settled over the community. At last one grimy paw waved tentatively.

"Well?"

"We could cut our heads off and give them that way."

The gloom deepened when this answer turned out to be amiss and all thought desperately. Another paw waved. "What is your answer, little man?"

"We must keep our heads inside of a car window."

This answer seemed so to satisfy the class that it was cruelty to disabuse them. But it had to be done. Another period of horrified reflection ensued, out of which ventured two guesses:

"I could give my head to my country by letting some one put a bullet into it."

"I give my head to my country by putting my hand to it in the s'lute."

The rejection of these advances created such a weakness among the children that total dissolution was threatened, but a big, handsome boy in the rear saved the day. He was a very big boy, the class dunce probably; one of those chaps who promote themselves in the course of years simply by outgrowing their desks, and who in manhood

make fine strides toward success untrammeled by learning. This long, lazy youth—whose extended limbs were undoubtedly the factors in the constant anguish of amusement to be seen on the face of the little boy in front of him—had been enjoying the exercises thus far as matters gotten up for his sole entertainment; but now, wishing a change of topic, he put an end to the present foolishness by rising suddenly and stating, with smiling decision, "We can't give our heads to our country. We only say so."

The children settled back in their seats with immense breaths of relief, and we felt that to refuse an explanation so patently incontrovertible would be to lower our dignity; we therefore succumbed.

The heart being a more mysterious organ than the head, which is apt to flourish in memory by being unlawfully tapped by rulers, the second clause in the "s'lute" was passed over by the examiner. So, picking out a tiny damsel, he made on her these easy demands:

"'One country'—what country?"

"America, sir."

"Yes, indeed. And of course you know who discovered America?"

"Yes, sir. Columbia, sir."

"Well, nearly. Columbus—can you tell me his first name?"

"Yes, sir."

"What is it?"

"Hail."

To offset this slip, the class was instructed to sing the song in mention, and their performance was beyond cavil, so hearty, so musical were their fresh young voices, and so inexhaustible were their memories—verse after verse rippling forth, with never a book in sight!

"Do you like to sing patriotic songs?"

"YES SIR!" in a thundering chorus.

Better than other songs?"

"YES, SIR!"

"Why?"

The chorus was silenced. After a pause a bullet-headed, philosophical young Teuton said, with the slowness characteristic of a deep thinker, "For pecause dey makes de piggest noise."

"What do you mean by patriotic, by patriotism?" was the next question.

"Putting flags on your house when somebody dies."

"Getting a half holiday and going to holler at the soldiers as they go by."

"Patriotism's killin' Germans."

These definitions were given by boys, to the disgust of a tiny girl, who jumped up with an indignant pipe of, "Patriotism is love of your country."

The teacher, who, as might be expected, was not thoroughly enjoying herself, beamed approval at little miss; but the examiner felt an unshaken pride in his own sex, for the reason that the boys' answers published the fact that with them patriotism meant action.

"What has your country ever done for you that you should love it?"

Oddly enough, this simple query was a poser. A timid girl remarked that her country had given her an exquisition—something evidently very horrible, for she promptly put her head down upon her desk and howled with grief, utterly refusing to explain herself.

The blank, not to say terrified, faces of the youngsters forced the teacher from the subordinate part of listener to controller, and rising majestically from her seat, she commanded, "Children, mention five advantages you derive from being American citizens!"

With immediate cordiality they chanted in chorus, "Liberty, protection at home and abroad, self-government, free schools and public libraries!"

We couldn't have touched the right button. Encouraged at such unanimous knowledge, we probed it a little, and elicited the facts that liberty meant being out of jail, that you got protection if you could find a policeman, that self-government was doing as you pleased.

We now asked our victims if they would write for us a verse or two of their favorite patriotic song and they made no objection, appearing even to like the employment. One child, announcing that she intended to write "Andy's quotation," asked that Andy be allowed to recite it for her as a help to her memory. Andy, who proved to be the long-limbed idler, gallantly went to the trouble of extricating himself from his desk, stepped into the aisle, and apparently repeated these words from Drake's Address to the American Flag:

"Forever float that standard sheet!
Where breathes the foe but falls before us,
With Freedom's soil beneath our feet,
And Freedom's banner streaming o'er us?"

Apparently. What he really did say

was made manifest by his written words, for he, too, chose to write the words. We will reproduce them later.

Before commenting upon the papers handed in to us, we wish to present a significant statistic or two: The average age of this class was ten years and one month; in their last spelling review they had taken a percentage of eighty-eight; and they were now allowed to write the song of their own choosing. "The Star-Spangled Banner" seemed to be a general favorite, but certainly not through the merit of being understood; for, from the very beginning, where, "dawn's early light" varied from the harmless shibboleth of "darn surly lie," every line was garbled and twisted into some startling grotesqueness, the whole ending with the agonized appeal, "Oh, say does the star spangled Banner get weighed? or the home of the free? or the land of the brave?" A simple line in the second stanza, "blest with victory and peace," appeared once "less the fig trees and peas"; and another time, "bless with big trees apiece"; while the stanza concluded with, "Does the star Spangled banner yet wade?"

Of course, once in a while a phrase was rendered correctly, there being but one song which claimed the distinction of containing a line totally uncomprehended by any child using it. That song was Julia Ward Howe's Battle Hymn of the Republic, the line being the one which pictures the God of Battles as "trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored." Without exception the word "vintage" was interpreted "village," and the rest of the line was varied to suit particular needs; one need expressing itself prosaically: "He is tramping round the village where the grapes arrive from shore."

The most damning quality of these extracts was their painfully exact spelling. They could mean nothing else than what they said. In a vilely spelled screed there is always a chance that it may mean the right thing in spite of appearances. For instance, one little chap handed in a paper with the simple, brief announcement, "Gloriglo, halua lua lura halua lua." It was evident at a glance that this was the familar chorus, "Glory, Glory, hallelujah;" and it was just as good spelled one way as another. But so much cannot be said for "the swine of each pastry Arctic Ocean," which was one child's conception of the "shrine of each patriot's devotion," and preceded the statement that Columbia "roared" safe through the storm. As Columbia had been stigmatized a few lines above as "the yam of the ocean," there must have been quite a mixture of pictures in that child's mind.

It is a pity that religious discussions are tabooed in our public schools, otherwise it might have been profitable to have interrogated the pupil who made a coy suggestion to "blast the popes that have made and preserved us a nation." Her mental concept may have been "praised the power," but it is doubtful.

Most of the songs were wonderfully well written and punctuated, the exceptions being rare. The lad who wrote the following was probably tired.

"Dam dam dam the boys are marching cheer up comrads they will come and aneath the tarny pag we will been an airn again in the freedom of our annie ammie ome."

The translation we reserve to ourselves; but of course we cannot prevent the persevering few from finally simplifying the "tarny pag," "been an airn," and "annie ammie ome."

Believing that little children are never too young to be taught to reverence and love their country and to understand its heart-songs, and believing also that a Columbia which is pictured as a cross between a yam and swine cannot be a very lovely figure in a little patriot's mind, the compiler of these notes ventures to suggest that when our little tots at school are taught the words of patriotic songs, plentiful and constantly repeated explanation should go hand in hand with such instruction. Beautiful, indeed, is it to see a class give signs of thorough drill in inspiring exercises of collective patriotism; but to be ardently effective, the drill should begin with the individual. Then might Andy see some beauty in his address to his loved flag, which at present he is rendering thus:

"Forever wave that standing cheat
Where breeze the foe but falls beforus,
With freedoms oil beneath our feet
And freedom's banner screaming orus."

# YOUNG AMERICA LEARNING

*How Ideas Come to Children*

*By* WILLIAM H. ALLEN

FOR eight years Mr. Allen, Director of the Institute for Public Service, has been collecting what he terms "high spots in the field of education."

Through his correspondence courses in civic instruction and training for citizenship, he has collected a formidable number of blunders. The following school blunders are a few of the great number that are constantly pouring in as a result of his course in two weekly lessons on selected important current problems, one for upper grammar grades in high school and the other for the intermediate grades.

Mr. Allen cites these blunders as illustration of the fact that confused ideas in school mean later confused ideas and muddled practices in government and business.

What is the Monroe Doctrine? When Monroe was president he had a doctor and ever since people have had doctors.

What is the Ruhr? A German army trying to keep the French out of Germany.

What was Pinchot before he became Governor? President of the conversation committee.

What were Harding's achievements? The most important one was the limitation of ornaments.

What is the electoral college? A place for boys to learn electricity.

What is an ambassador? A man who takes the costumes of one country to another and compares them.

What are election polls? Poles which hold up the voting building.

How was our constitution first changed? After the constitution was adopted it did not just suit the people, so they passed the Ten Commandments to fix it up.

What is the Reichstag? President of Germany.

Who was the greatest American poet? Shakespeare.

What was the direct cause of the Civil War? Taxation without meditation.

What words of Patrick Henry's speech do you not understand? Taxation without respiration is tyranny.

What were greenbacks? Men who during the Civil War issued paper money and carried green signs on their backs so that people could distinguish them from other people.

What is the Mason-Dixon line? A line made by masons.

Name two of the original colonies. Europe and Asia.

Why did the Pilgrims have such a hard time when they came to America? Because they were not yet citizens.

Who was Bonar Law? The man who wanted a bonus for the soldiers.

Tell why Germany and Austria lost prestige. I've looked all over the map and can't find prestige.

What is specific heat? The heat that the Pacific Ocean gives off.

What is hygiene? A gas.

What does the earth rotate on? Its accidents.

What is the difference between lightning and electricity? You don't have to pay for lightning.

What is the use of the skeleton? To keep us from falling down in a pile.

What is the hypothenuse? Oh, I saw one in the circus. It is an animal from South America.

How does an alien become a citizen? He must first be neutralized.

Who lives in Utah? A religious insect called Mormons.

How did you hear the president's message? Over the radiator shortly after it was delivered to Congress.

What is the difference between he will and he shall? He will is future tense; he shall is later.

What are hysterics? Something that tells about history.

What is a barbecue? A place to get your hair cut.

Why did the Hebrews leave the Arabian desert? On account of the feminine.

What is possession? Your job.

What is an oasis? An animal something like a man.

What is the esophagus? The thing the backbone leans on.

Why does bread sometimes have holes? Because it is made of whole wheat.

What is a naturalized citizen? A man who studies nature.

Who discovered the Pacific? Balboa while wandering around the Mississippi River.

What are the axes of the earth? Things that you chop wood with.

What do they mine in the central states? Oysters.

What does M.P. stand for after Lloyd George? Moving pictures.

What did Columbus prove? That the world was larger than it really was.

In what battle did General Wolfe say when hearing of victory: "I die happy?" I think it was his last.

What is meant by the Constitution of the United States? The Declaration of Independence.

What is a molecule? Something so small that it can only be seen through a microbe.

What was the light that Columbus saw? The Statue of Liberty.

What is a pioneer? A man who plays the piano.

What is made from petroleum? Rugs used in the kitchen.

What is a biography? A history. Then what is an autobiography? An auto's history.

Name a constitutional right. The right to keep bare arms.

Where is Chile? A place in the Arctic Ocean.

How did Plymouth Rock get its name? From that kind of hen.

Use the word gratitude in a sentence. We study gratitude and longitude at school.

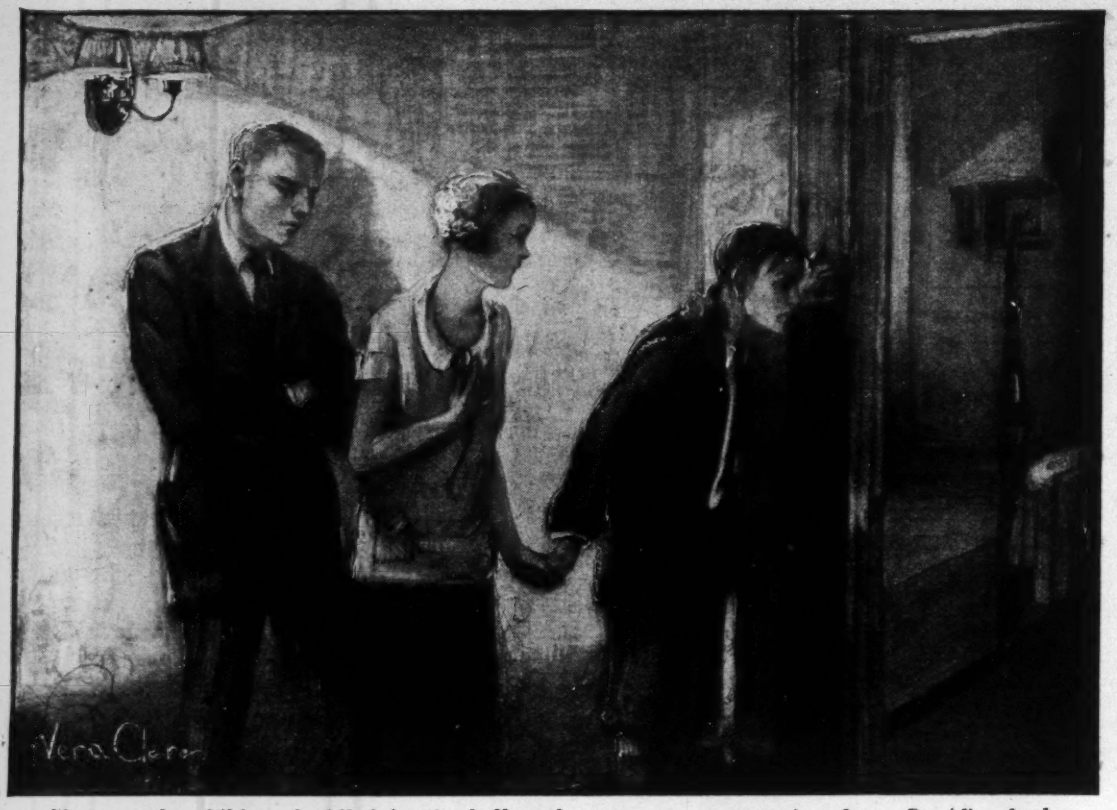
What happened in 1823 that greatly affects the U. S. foreign policy? The Compromise of 1850.

What raw materials does this country send to China? Missionaries.

What is a volcano? A mountain that is sick to its stomach.

Tell something about George Washington. He never told a lie except when he said he did.

What does K. K. K. mean? Keep Kleveland Klean.



*She saw the children huddled in the hall — the tears were streaming down David's cheeks.*

# THEIR MOTHER

*By* JESSIE DOUGLAS FOX

*Illustrated by Vera Clere*

THE November drizzle had chilled her through, Mrs. Loring thought, as she pushed open the front door. The hall was dark, the house was chilly.

"David! Emily!" she called, but no one answered.

She lighted the gas wondering why Emily was so late in getting home from high school and felt her way down the rickety cellar steps wishing that David would not let the furnace fire go out so often.

Mary Loring was panting a little after her wrestle with the furnace but she did not stop to take off her hat. She put on a kettle of water and went to the bread box feeling around for the stale loaf. The children always liked cream toast and she'd open one of her precious jars of preserved watermelon. Henry, her nineteen-year-old, would like a cup of hot tea on such a night.

When the oven was lighted and the cream sauce started, she had a moment to take off her hat. She laid it on the hall table and looked into the mirror absently. How thin her hair was getting about her temples lately, she thought, as she took out her back comb to put in place the straggling hairs in the back of her neck. Her gray eyes met the reflected ones courageously. She smiled. But the tiny nagging fear that had followed her all day as she shopped for silks and gimps was not downed by that smile.

Was she losing her grip on the children? Had she lived in them and for them too deeply?

It had been hard in those early days after Austin's death to bring up her

fatherless brood; but they had been so utterly dependent on her for everything that she could not fail them. Often she had been at her wit's end for money; when even to buy a new pair of shoes for Davy, who stubbed them out with such frequency, had meant a desperate struggle; yet she was conscious of the children's precious nearness. Then she had sold her first silk lampshade and things had been a little better.

How she remembered funny, big-eyed Davy who followed her about from room to room with his book of fairy tales. When she sat down he squatted near her, engrossed in his Andrew Lang at once; but she had chuckled to herself to see him rise and follow her when she hurried to the kitchen. There on a stool in the corner he would prop his head on his hands and fall contentedly to reading again. That was Davy at eight, now at fourteen he shrank from the slightest caress.

And roly-poly Emily pink of cheek with a fuzz of soft hair! Cunning Emily with her, "Am I pretty, muvver?" Oh yes, she was pretty now, seventeen-year-old Emily with her exquisite ankles and her soft hair falling across her cheeks. And problematical. Mary Loring sighed unconsciously as she put the blue tea pot on the oven to warm. If only Emily had some of her older brother Henry's dependable quality. She was so sure of Henry. The day he had run the pencil into his forehead he had gone, all alone on his sturdy nine year old legs, to have Dr. Balch sew it up.

"I thought you might be scared, Mum," was his sole explanation, "and so I went alone."

She need not feel a moment's doubt of him.

"Moth—er! Where are you?"

The front door banged on the sound of Emily's high excited voice. She turned to meet Emily, who was panting as though she had run all the way home, with reddened cheeks and flying hair beaded with mist. Mary Loring looked at her with tender appraising eyes.

*David let the furnace fire go out so often.*

"What do you think? The most awful thing! Henry's gone and got engaged to that Hannigan girl. Yes, she told me herself when I was coming by her father's cigar store. And she made me swear not to tell."

"It may not be true, Sister," her mother said, slipping into the appellation of babyhood. "Let's wait until Henry tells us."

But she felt almost faint. She ran a glass of water and then she poured it out without drinking it.

"It is true! It is!" Emily panted. "Oh Mother, if you could see that awful Hannigan girl with her frizzes! She's old, too. She's twenty-three!"

"Promise me you won't say anything to Henry about it," her mother urged.

"It isn't as if you can stop him!" Emily flared; with the sound of a sob she flung out of the kitchen.

Mechanically Mrs. Loring began to set the table. A spoon, a knife, a fork, a little silver mug. She had set a place for the baby whom she had lost two years ago. Blindly she put away the tarnished silver mug. She laid the bread on the broiler in the oven and opened the preserves while the words said themselves over and over, "Why didn't Henry tell me? Oh why didn't he tell me?" She stopped on her way to the dining room with a plate in her hand. It came to her in a flash that she had seen the Hannigan girl in the bank where Henry worked. A pretty girl with over-red lips and a loud empty laugh.

Mrs. Loring picked up her hat and coat and went up to her room. She must have a little time to pull herself together before Henry arrived. A light showed from the key-hole at the end of the hall. Mrs. Loring went down the two steps and opened the door.

"Why, David, I didn't know you were home!"

David lifted his head from his book without answering. His plain face with the beautiful blue eyes looked at her reticently. His eyes sought his book again.

"Cream toast for supper, Davy!"

David dug his hand in his hair, waiting patiently for her to go.

His mother lingered at the door a trifle wistfully.

"How's the Latin coming, Davy?"

He mumbled, "I'm through with it."

"Through?"

"I've flunked my exams. I'm not going any more."

"Oh, David!"

A feeling of utter hopelessness engulfed her for a moment.

"But Davy, what about college? There's your Uncle David's money in the bank just for that."

She felt his defiance, his will battling her with a power as distinct as hatred.

"I'm not going to school any more."

Her eyes sought his face through a blinding mist.

"We'll talk about it later," his mother said in a voice that shook.

She closed the door after her, groping her way up the two steps to her room, feeling for the first time how tired she was as she laid her hat and coat on the bed. It was at that moment she heard the front door open and Henry run up the stairs past her room. In the darkness of her room, she dropped her head.

"Oh God, help me to find them," she prayed.

"Henry?" she called faintly.

He came unwillingly from his room, the light in the hall falling full on his broad forehead, his sensitive boy's mouth.

"Henry," she began again nervously, like a girl who is about to confess her guilt. Color patched her cheeks unevenly, her voice sounded thin and dry, "Emily just told me——"

Henry looked at her startled.

"That I's engaged?"

His mother nodded. Only by an effort could she keep back the words, "Why didn't you tell me yourself, Henry?"

"Look here, Mother," Henry said with a burning intensity, "I didn't want to tell you until the whole thing was settled. Lucile's a wonderful girl. When you know Lucile you'll see how lucky I am."

"But aren't you a little young?"

"Nineteen? That isn't young!" Henry said earnestly, "I've got to marry her or she'll be snatched up. There's a man, an older man of twenty-five, who's after her."

"You're not thinking of getting married soon?" his mother gasped.

"That's just it. I am," Henry said.

His mother had never seen that look of willful obstinacy on his face before.

"When—when do you think of getting married?" she tried to ask quietly but her voice broke pitifully.

Henry rushed on to tell her of Lucile, and Lucile's fine but misunderstood family, and eventually that he was going to be married at the beginning of the year.

"Before you do anything you'll bring her to see me?" his mother asked, putting her hand on his arm.

The telephone rang, Henry made a rush for it. His mother leaned back against the bannisters, hearing his voice ardent and eager with a new caressing note in it. But she couldn't go on leaning weakly against the bannisters. She must do something. Now. Go to the girl's family and tell them frankly of Henry's circumstances.

Mrs. Loring went along the hall to her room, shivering a little. She must have forgotten to put on the draughts so that the furnace fire had gone out again. If it wasn't too late she could go over to Hannigan's after supper. In her room she felt around in the dark for her mother's gold hunting-case watch. It always lay there in the center of her bureau. She fumbled for the matches, lighted the gas and looked down at the old-fashioned watch case. It was empty. She pulled open one bureau drawer after another forgetting to close them. Of course she had laid the watch down somewhere, for nothing else had been touched. She went to Emily's door.

"Did you see grandma's watch anywhere? I must have laid it down."

Emily was scarlet. Then white. She met her mother's eyes with defiance.

"I took it. It was going to be mine anyway; you know grandma always said so. I had to have money."

"You took it?" her mother asked.

"I pawned it," Emily said in a muffled voice, "I had to have a new dress for Julia's dance."

Her mother put her hand up to her throat. She stared in miserable dismay from Emily to the length of black velvet that lay across Emily's white iron bed.

"Emily!" It was a whispered cry.

The next moment she had caught the iron bed post, and sagged to her knees. Emily stooped over her, but she could not lift that dreadful dead weight. She ran to the bannisters calling, "Henry, something's happened to mother!"

Their mother saw the three faces bending over her a minute later, white—terror-smitten.

"You carry her," Emily whispered, "I'll get her bed ready."

David knelt beside the bed, smoothing the blanket with fumbling fingers, lifting a furtive sleeve to his eyes while Henry telephoned in a strangled voice for the doctor.

When the doctor came stamping up the stairs and thrust open her door, Mary Loring saw the children huddled in the hall. The tears were streaming down David's cheeks, Henry leaned against the wall with folded arms, only Emily stood straight and white like a little painted figure.

As he came out of her mother's room Emily asked in a passionate whisper, "Is she going to live?"

"Be careful of her. Look out for her," was all his gruff voice would vouchsafe.

"Your supper's in the oven, children," Mrs. Loring called faintly.

"Yes, darling," Emily answered.

From the regions of the furnace sounded the shoveling of coal and soon a delicious warmth began to steal through the house. Emily appeared steadying a cup of pale tea and a ragged little slice of toast.

While her mother swallowed her tea, Emily sat beside the bed looking at the work-worn hands, the needle-pricked finger-tips. She glanced down at her own white hands with rose-tipped fingers and hid them away in the folds of her dress as though she could not bear to see them. She saw her mother's wispy braid of hair, the faint hollows in her cheeks, the broad beautiful forehead lined prematurely as though she had never seen these signs before. She got up suddenly and tiptoed from the room; her mother heard her stifled sobbing breath.

As Emily turned her mother's pillow that night and smoothed the covers, she leaned for a moment with her warm cheek pressed against her mother's. No word passed between them; but their old intimate understanding seemed to be established with that silent caress.

Mary Loring slept until mid-morning. The excruciating pain kept her flat on her back. The sounds of her little world filtered up to her; the iceman's lumbering footsteps, the metallic clink of his pincers as he passed beneath her open window. The faint air puffing her curtains in and out lifted a spicy fragrance

to her nostrils. Why there on her crowded work table was a jar of white carnations! She remembered how Austin had filled her room with white carnations after David was born.

Davy, her youngest. Why had she lost him so completely? Why did his mouth set in that sullen line and his eyes watch her with such inimical judgment? Mary Loring propped herself on her elbow as she heard someone trying to move noiselessly past her door.

"Davy!" she called in a whisper.

He stood at the door, his Caesar under his arm, his eyes swollen with weeping.

"Sit down on the bed, Davy."

He came in awkwardly and then he crumpled up on her bed so that she saw only the top of his fair rumpled hair. She caught a few strangled words.

"——Didn't want his old money. Why didn't he leave it to Henry. Henry never had a chance to go to college."

"Davy, you mean you weren't going to college on the money Uncle David left you because you thought he ought to have left it to Henry?"

David nodded convulsively.

Sunlight fingered the bowed fair head and spread with shining splendor over his mother's face, touching her smile into heart-breaking beauty. She laid her hand on his tumbled thatch of hair. He did not shrink from her caress.

"Henry's worth a hundred of me!"

"Henry never wanted to go to college," his mother said gently. "Uncle David saw that. It wasn't just because you were his namesake, David. We talked it all over and Henry's to have the old farm up in Hudson county, after your grandfather dies. Henry's always loved it. I've never told anyone before."

"I'll go back to school."

Emily's shocked voice interrupted.

"David, how can you? You mustn't go in there bothering mother!"

The day passed slowly, dreamily, with the ghostly sunshine falling across her bed and Mary Loring staring up at the ceiling saw pictures go streaming past.

Of Austin, her young husband with his arm linked through hers, wandering from room to room of the house they had fallen in love with. The narrow house with the thin little turrets and the tower room that had enchanted her. The ridiculous tower room that broiled in the summer heat and froze in winter.

Of Austin kneeling beside her bed, peering into the face of their first-born.

"He has beautiful eyes like yours," she had said so faintly.

"And he has a mouth and nose like yours," Austin had answered solemnly.

Then they gave way to weak hysterical laughter that the dot of a nose and the robin's mouth should be hers.

Of Marion, her last baby, with her rings of fiery golden hair, and a tear caught on the round of her cheek, asleep in her cradle—asleep for two long years.

The mist cleared from Mary Loring's eyes. She remembered the freezing winter that had lasted so endlessly when she didn't have money to buy coal. Valiantly she had chopped up her wedding trunk and her mother's cherry bed. She could almost hear Davy's shouts of glee when the fire in the grate crackled and the children had brought their bowls of milk and crackers to eat by its warmth.

And the summer Henry was twelve and had scarlet fever. She had read to him until her voice went hoarse; they had been very close to each other.

How tremulously sweet Emily had been in her graduating dress of tucked white mull! Her own wedding gown cut over with painstaking care.

Mary Loring roused herself, still faintly smiling from her memories, to wonder at the curious quietness of the house. Emily tiptoed past her door with a white strained face. She heard Henry moving about his room, the opening and shutting of bureau drawers. David seemed to be awkward and confused when he came to ask her how she was. She sat up and forced her body to obey her will. She dragged herself out of bed and sank limply into a chair by the window. The children's voices floated up to her from the kitchen below.

"Aren't you going to tell mother, Henry?" Emily said.

"She couldn't stand the shock."

"What time is the wedding?"

"Four."

"You'd better change your things down at the bank or mother may suspect. Is Lucile going to wear white?"

Mary Loring crowded down the startled cry that rose in her throat. She heard their young confident steps pass beneath her window.

"Good-by, mother," Henry called up.

Yes, it was good-by. For Mary Loring

faced the bitter fact that she had failed. Failed somehow to win their confidence. Failed somehow to give them that precious ingredient—truth—on which character is laid. The poverty born with cheerful courage, the laughter and tears, the deep love she bore for them, her joyous sacrifice of youth and freedom had not been enough.

"Oh God, help me to find them! Don't let it be too late," she asked in an agony of despair.

Mary Loring began to get dressed by painfully slow stages, sinking weakly on the bed after she had made the mighty effort of putting on her oxfords. It seemed to take hours to comb her hair, to put in the slippery hair pins, for her arms were heavy and ached with the effort. She stood up at last, shaky and uncertain, clutching at bedpost and chair as she passed.

Step by step she fought her way down the stairs. Sinking at last to sitting position, she made the rest of the journey on her hands. Drops of sweat lay coldly on her forehead when she reached the living room.

Mary Loring stared about her in wonder. It was dusted and in order. There on the table was the yellow silk lampshade, finished except for the yellow fringe at the bottom. Emily must have done that.

She did not hear the door open, but she was aware that someone was in the room, and looking up she saw Emily, tremulous and white-cheeked.

"Oh Emily, why didn't you tell me about Henry?" burst from her.

"Oh darling, we were afraid to tell you! The doctor said we must be careful of you."

Two tears started from Emily's eyes and made a zigzag course down her cheeks. She made a supplicating gesture toward her mother and laid in her lap something still hot from her palm.

Her mother looked down at the watch.

"Emily!" she whispered, "grandma's watch. How did you get it back?"

"I made the black velvet dress and sold it to Julia, and—and I bought the watch back."

"Aren't you going to the dance?"

"I couldn't when you're sick. You didn't think I'd want to go to the wretched dance or wear that black velvet dress? As long as I live," Emily said fervently, "I'll never forget how contemptible I was. Never." A hard-won smile quivered through her tears.

"It's—it's time for your tea."

The room was filling with a gentle dusk when Emily returned with the blue tea pot and a plate of buttered toast. Her cheeks were lightly flushed; her new-found air of protectiveness was lovely in her mother's eyes.

Mary Loring poured out a cup of tea, but she laid it down without tasting it, for Henry, hollow-eyed and worn, stood awkwardly at the door with a suitcase beside him.

His mother tried to smile at him.

"How do you feel?" he asked with restraint.

"I'm much better."

She saw with pity his struggle to bring out the next words.

"Lucile was married this afternoon. To an older man than me——"

Mary Loring could not speak, but Henry struggled on.

"She married William Booth. In St. Mary's church. I—I was there. I changed my clothes at the bank."

Beneath the stupendous feeling of relief that rushed over her, his mother felt a pity for her first-born that smote her to the heart.

"Why did she marry the other man so suddenly, Henry?" she asked gently.

"Well, I told her I had to look out for you and she—and she didn't see it that way."

She wanted to take him in her arms, mother his head against her breast, but she understood the tremendous effort he was making for self-control and she only said, "Will you tell Emily to have one of the jars of preserved watermelon for supper, and maybe you'd open it for her? And Henry, I'm going to get well—at once!"

She saw him stop and turn around.

"I guess I'll never forget how wonderful you were when we were growing up!" he said, his voice husky and dry.

His mother groped her way to the stairs. The gas in the hall was lighted, a delicious heat crept up from the furnace that David was tending.

Their mother's face in the dim light was fleetingly beautiful.

"I've found my children again," she thought with a deep rejoicing. "Oh that blessed, blessed lumbago!"

*Three celebrated clowns, Pete Mardo, William Bell and "Marceline."*

# GETTING THE CIRCUS TO MARKET

*Instead of shipping his goods to market, the circus owner ships his factory ten thousand miles a year and sells his goods at point of manufacture.*

*By* EARL CHAPIN MAY

I SPEND most of my summer vacations visiting circuses. My friends regard this as a harmless vice. For forty years I have followed the white tops, vicariously and otherwise, and I still find the circus business the most fascinating of American commercial institutions.

Charles Sparks, veteran showman, threw a white light on this fascination one bright morning as he watched his tents arise at Jamaica, Long Island. I had commented upon the ease with which his circus went through its daily setting up exercises.

"Any boob can run a circus," he replied. "The trick is to know where to put it."

This was the showman's cryptic way of saying that his great problem is to know where to pitch the tents to make the most profit. Mr. Sparks has another way of putting it:

"You have to work off the nut," he says. The "nut" is the daily overhead and it takes cash to work it off. Sparks must get his circus to market.

To know the circus business thoroughly one must be a master geographer, economist and statistician. If this country were threatened with invasion and the government at Washington wanted to know instantly all about the country, its geography and resources, it could get the most accurate information from a gathering of circus owners and their general agents. Cities, towns, highways, crops, bridges, waterways, railroads, industries, population figures and possibilities of army maintenance—all the salient facts are stored away in the brains of these circus men.

Other armies have already taken tips

from our essentially American circus. When the Barnum and Bailey show was trouping across the German Empire, the Kaiser was much impressed by the efficiency of its commissary department. He ordered his military chiefs to copy the Yankee circus cookhouse.

When the French were preparing to cross the Rhine they discarded their crude method of loading artillery by lifting it onto cars and adopted our circus runs from ground to car levels.

The American circus fooled military men at first because it moved without snap or speed. No one around a circus seems to be in a hurry. But if you happen to hold a watch on any particular operation you are amazed at the speed exhibited. That is the result of preparation which the public never sees.

### BILL HAS ANOTHER GUESS

Some fine spring morning John Brown and Bill Green meet at the post office in Bird Point, Iowa. Like millions of other John Browns and Bill Greens they sniff the air and think of circuses. For spring means circus to boys of all ages.

"Wonder will we get a show here this summer," muses John.

"Guess the circus folks ain't thought about Bird Point yet," says Bill.

Bill has another guess coming. If Bird Point is any kind of show town at all, a dozen or so circus owners have given it careful thought and reached a decision six months before.

In fact about the first thing a circus owner does after he is safely settled in winter quarters is to prepare for the season to come. Two things he must decide: How large is the show to be? Where will it go? The first decision rests very much upon the second. Established circuses do not lack capital; they can be enlarged at will. The cautious circus owner pays attention principally to "territory" and therein lies the secret of the successful showman. Unless he knows how and where to "put" his circus so that it will get cash, the creditors will get the circus.

There are two types of problem met in routing American circuses—the problem of routing the Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Combined Shows with their one hundred cars, and the problem of routing the smaller shows of thirty cars or less.

*Bessie Harvey, the original prima-donna of the white tops.*

### THE BIG SHOW

In some respects "The World's Greatest" or "The Big Show," as it is familiarly known among troupers, has the simpler problem. Its reputation is such that it can exhibit in New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Detroit, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles and a few other cities for extended engagements year after year. The Big Show generally visits the eastern cities in the spring, grain belt cities in the summer and western and southern cities in the fall. It is considered good circus practice to "follow the wheat harvest" through Minnesota and Western Canada.

It is also true that The Big Show can stop successfully at small towns where it has to break the jump between larger centers of population. But its enormous size compels it to make many long runs between stands. The longest of these are usually made on Sunday, but this is not always the case.

The most remarkable run of last season was from San Bernardino to Provo. The circus trains left the California city Tuesday night, September 18, and reached the Utah town Thursday morning, September 20. Then, after exhibiting in Nebraska and Kansas, it toured Oklahoma and Texas and closed November 5 at Richmond, Virginia. That was the second consecutive year it had played from coast to coast and traveled approximately 15,000 miles.

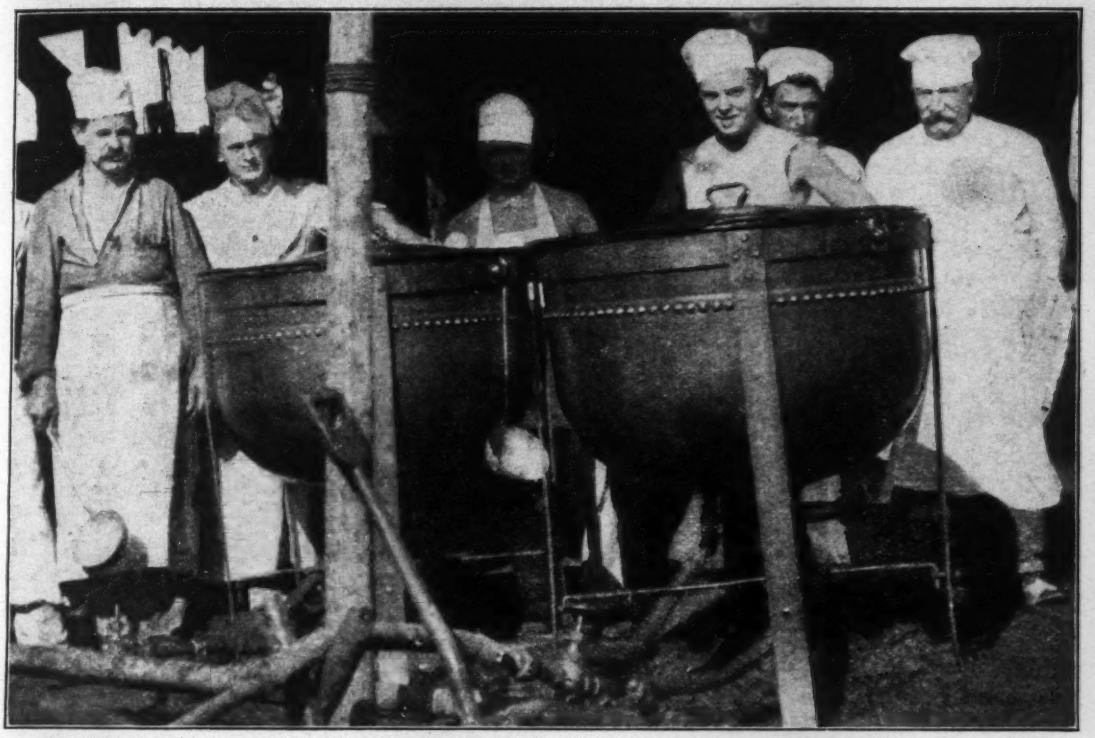
A circus man will tell you that The Big Show has no opposition, that its title has such pulling power that it can go anywhere and get the money. All that the Ringlings and their highly departmentalized organization have to look out for is the possibility of getting local licenses, circus grounds, food for the performers, feed for the animals and a few hundred other essentials. Each day they face combinations of situations that would drive an ordinary manufacturer crazy, but they know their business and their territory. It is a circus legend that either John or Charles Ringling can poke an arm out of a Pullman window any dark night and tell just where he is by the feel of the air. And knowing the Ringlings, I believe it.

### DOING BATTLE WITH THE RINGLINGS

It is a rare day in June or any month when any other circus can do battle with The Big Show and come out victorious, but it has been tried. In 1922 the Sells-Floto Circus made the attempt.

The battle began in Washington, continued through Oregon and California and was carried to such extremes on the Arizona desert that both shows pitched their tents at Phoenix, Arizona, on September 18. The officials of the city were alarmed when they found over two

*The circus dining tent mobilized for the Fourth of July.*



*The German Kaiser made a study of circus kitchen equipment before he made war.*

thousand circus people, representing rival camps, in their midst. But nothing came of it except a gala day for Phoenix.

People motored a hundred miles to see the two circuses. Some went to The Big Show in the afternoon and the Second Largest Show in the World at night. Others reversed the process. About 50,000 persons paid to see the circuses that day. Once in a blue moon hot opposition helps both shows.

### DON'T BELIEVE THEM

The main idea of the lesser shows is to steer clear of opposition. And they generally keep out of the way of The Big Show unless they can get far ahead or far behind it. The first question the average circus owner seeks to answer in the winter is, therefore, "Where will The Big Show go next season?" That is the beginning of the annual guessing contest. After each owner decides upon an answer to this vital question, he attempts to figure out where the other shows will go.

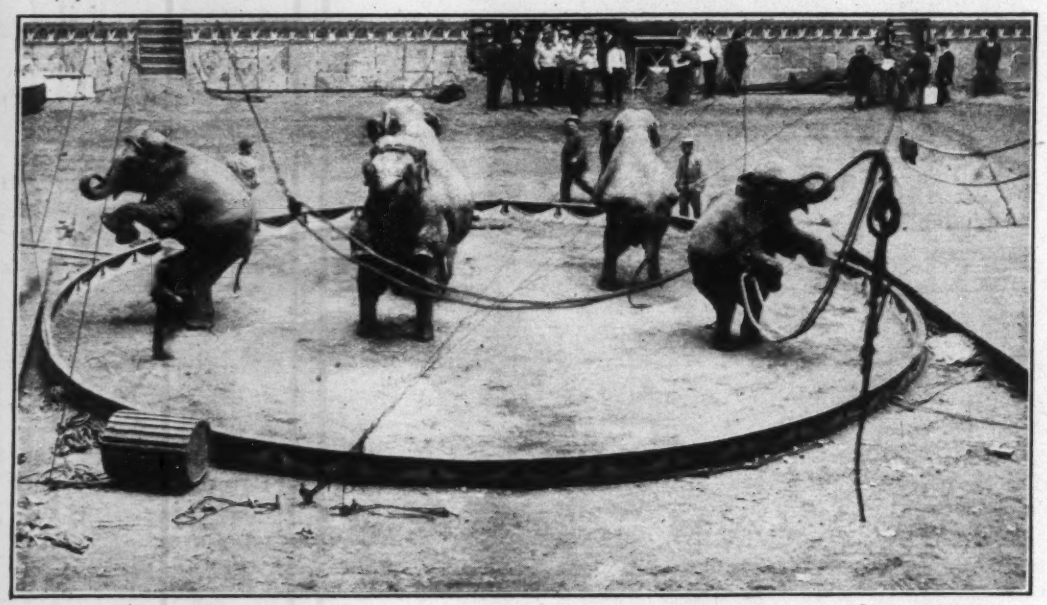
Some circus owners direct the routing of their shows, but no circus could be routed without a general agent. It is his job to know where every rival circus is going and to keep the rivals from knowing where his own is going.

If you want to see some first-class poker, join Frink of the Walter L. Main Show, Ed Knupp of the Hagenbeck-Wallace Shows, Murray Pennock of the Barnes Circus, Harvey of the Syndicate Shows and Tony Ballenger of the Sparks Circus in the lobby of the American Hotel in St. Louis. Each will tell the others frankly just where his show is going and over what route and railroad he has contracted or is about to contract his circus. But don't believe a word of it. Each one knows his dear friends are lying. And to prove it he slyly sallies over to different railroad offices and gets inside information—for every general agent has a reliable scout in every railroad office.

When Sparks moves his amusement factory into winter quarters at Macon, he and Tony Ballenger, his general agent, sit down for a game of chess. The board is a map of the United States and Canada, the chess men are the various circuses. The game is played in their minds, but the chess-board and chessmen are very real to them. They play the game over and over.

Finally Sparks says, "My guess is that the other shows will do so and so." Sometimes Tony disagrees with his boss. They argue it out.

"Suppose we open the season here in Macon, April 1," Sparks says, "and play this route until July 4." With a bit of pencil on a bit of paper he sets down a list of eighty stands where the circus shall unload, set up, exhibit and load during the period under discussion. The proposed route takes the Sparks Circus over 7,000 miles of railroad and through fifteen states from Georgia to Maine. It forecasts transportation, climatic and commercial conditions in the Eastern half of the United States. It makes all possible allowances for opposition from rival circuses. It gambles on wrecks, riots, storms and strikes.



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*A ton of hay a day is nothing for these performers to consume.*

### A FEW THINGS TO AVOID

Sparks laid out such a route in December, 1922. When the circus went on the road in 1923 it followed that route from April until July with only four changes. Sparks is an exceptional showman, but he could not have turned that particular trick without Tony Ballenger.

Besides avoiding rival shows the circus owner and general agent must look out for over a thousand local agricultural fairs and race meets and the chautauqua in ten thousand towns. It is not good form to play in opposition to one of these. The city may refuse to license the circus or the opposition may hurt business. It is almost certain to leave the townsfolk in a bad humor and that is a thing that Sparks, for one, avoids. For the Sparks Circus is a repeating circus. It goes over the same territory year after year, though it seldom shows the same town two years in succession.

Some shows satisfy the public's love of novelty by playing in the East one year and in the West the next. Sparks seldom goes west of the Mississippi, but he is constantly looking for fresh towns.

There are two kinds of fresh towns. A town is fresh when it has not been shown for several seasons. Tony Ballenger and other general agents keep records of all circus routes. If Tony can jump the Sparks Circus into a fresh town that is show hungry the circus gets the money, usually. A town is also fresh to Sparks when it has never seen the Sparks Circus. Being a conservative showman Sparks frequently sandwiches fresh towns between old ones.

Of course the different circuses are each eager to be the first into a good town, because the first show in is supposed to do the most business. The favorite method of elbowing a rival out is known as the "big squeeze."

### THE "BIG SQUEEZE"

In 1921 the John Robinson Circus and Howe's London Shows, under the same ownership, tried to squeeze the Sparks Circus down South. The John Robinson Circus "billed ahead" of Sparks, that is arranged and advertised to exhibit in certain towns before the Sparks Circus arrived. The Howe's London Shows "billed behind," that is arranged and advertised to exhibit in certain towns after the Sparks Circus was to exhibit. The prospective Sparks customers were blatantly warned not to await for Sparks but to see "the old John Robinson Circus" or were beseeched to wait for "the Big Howe's London Shows." While the cost of this squeeze was shared by the two circuses in opposition, the Sparks Circus had to bear the brunt of the battle alone. Charles Sparks is a good fighter, but he is also a good business man. He believes that he who fights and runs away will live to fight another day. He cancelled several towns, switched his route over night and, as Tony Ballenger put it, "when the smoke of battle cleared we were elsewhere."

The dream of the circusman is to have rich, open territory where there are no rival circuses, carnivals or other outdoor shows—he likes opposition less than any other ill to which he is heir. But you may be sure he encounters plenty of petty annoyances.

Some statesman in Massachusetts who had a grudge against the steam calliope or a friend in the boiler business got a law on the books which prevents the use of any boiler in Massachusetts not made in that state. The circus calliope player has a vacation when the circus plays Massachusetts, unless that circus has one of those new-fangled calliopes which are not nearly so piercing nor so circusy as the old steam pianos.

Some towns charge an exorbitant license for a street parade; some insist upon having one. An Ohio town has recently been heard from on this subject. Several circuses, arriving late, have not given the customary parade although it was advertised. The mayor has announced that if any circus hereafter advertises a street parade and fails to give it, its doors will be closed for the day. In most towns circusmen and merchants believe a "grand, glittering free street parade" brings money into their pockets.

### "RAILROADING" THE CIRCUS

Months before the season's opening, general agent Tony Ballenger starts his game of chess in earnest by signing railroad contracts. The circus is generally "railroaded" as much as three months in advance.

Railroad transportation costs about twice what it did before the war and is usually based on the number of cars in the train. Circus cars are usually sixty-foot wooden "flats" and "stocks" or

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*The stars' dressing tent has no furbelows.*

seventy foot steel cars. The sleepers are old Pullmans, seventy or eighty feet in length. Between ten and fifteen cars calls for one price, fifteen to twenty for another and so on. All circus men speak of a show as a "ten-car show" or a "twenty-car show."

Most railroads have a fixed charge for a minimum haul of fifty miles with a pro rata charge for any mileage in excess of that. It would be a happy general agent who could always keep his hauls within the minimum. None of them do. Sparks' Circus travels a hundred miles a day, season after season. The minimum for a twenty-car show in the pre-war days was about $250. Now it is more than $500. Sparks spent over $100,000 for railroad transportation last season.

As soon as any part of the circus route is decided upon, two of Ballenger's assistants, known as contracting agents, go over the route and contract locally for licenses, lots, feed and food. A ton of hay is nothing for a herd of healthy elephants and a side of beef merely whets the appetites of a few dozen "cat animals." Hundreds of horses are hungry for oats. Hundreds of humans are hungry for bread, milk and meat.

### THE VAN GUARD OF THE CIRCUS

In the wake of the contracting agents, about three weeks in advance of the circus, the first bill or advertising car goes out with eighteen or twenty billposters, banner men, lithographers, mail agents, press agents, cooks, paste makers, programers and car managers on board. This is where the circus overhead really starts.

The highly-colored window hangers you see along your Main Street this summer may cost 25 cents apiece; the old price was five cents. Many a billboard display costs ten dollars. A sheet of circus paper is forty inches wide and twenty-eight inches high. Sparks has put out more than 6,000 sheets in one stand.

Some of these were put out by the second advance car, a week behind the first; some by the flying squadron, opposition squad or box brigades. From thirty to a hundred advertising men may be in a town before the circus gets there. They have contracted to pay money or give passes for hundreds of "locations" in town and in the country for forty miles around in every direction.

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*The men's dressing room is wherever they happen to stand.*

The last man in the advance brigade is the route rider. He goes over the country routes to see that the billposters' work corresponds with the reports made by them to their car managers, as well as to see that the owners of the locations have not allowed the circus paper to be torn down or covered up. If he has time the route rider also checks up on city locations, although these are usually owned by a reliable city billposter who keeps his contracts.

### THE TWENTY-FOUR-HOUR MAN

A day ahead of the show comes the twenty-four-hour-man. He checks up all local contracts and sees that the railroad side tracks are ready and that local supply men deliver the goods—from circus grounds to meat, hay and grain for the animals, and bread, milk and other things for the circus cookhouse. The twenty-four-hour-man is an indispensable executive. There must be no delay in getting the show over the road. Every hour counts on the lot, as well as on the rails.

When the twenty-four-hour-man reaches a town he finds in the post office an envelope addressed to him by the advertising car manager or some other executive of the advance brigade. It contains a synopsis covering every detail of the activities of the circus in that town, including duplicate contracts wherever these have been made.

The twenty-four-hour-man meets the circus train when it comes in, usually about daylight, escorts the stake and chain wagon or motor truck from the railroad runs to the lot. He must allow the stake and chain gang time to leave oil beacons burning along the route, if it is still dark, and stay with the show during the early part of the day. Then he jumps ahead to the town which is to be "shown" two days hence.

When the circus comes into a town the train master and his crew of "razorbacks" spot the train. This is more complicated than it sounds. The stake and chain and the cookhouse wagons are the first loaded and unloaded. Sometimes it is necessary to turn the train around over a "y" before the runs can be placed. Very often the train is so turned or made up before leaving the previous town, in which case the runs are down and the first wagon rolls off the flats ten minutes after the train

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*Here is where an ordinary man becomes that figure of romance — a clown.*

has arrived. Five minutes thereafter the baggage stock, unloaded from the horse cars, is pulling the rumbling wagons towards the distant lot.

### THE HATED "SHAKE DOWN"

The day's work for the circus has begun, so has the day's work for the legal adjuster. He is another important functionary. He has to wrestle with the "shake downs."

Shake downs take many forms. Very often the city hall is not satisfied with the number of tickets allotted it in the license contract. Sometimes it is not given any tickets. Last season the city council of a Missouri town advanced its license from $100 to $125. The contracting agent from the Sells-Floto Circus appeared and paid for a license at that figure, after which he asked:

"Have I complied with all your requirements?"

"Yes," replied the clerk.

"Then good day," the agent said.

"But are there no complimentary tickets?" the clerk inquired.

"Not with such a license," the agent declared and that was the end of that.

Such an arrangement does not always hold, however. Officials have many ways of exercising the shake down.

A circus exhibited in Arkansas, last fall. The water contract was properly signed. There were no restrictions attached. The twenty-five tickets stipulated in the contract had been delivered by the circus management. At ten that morning the water supply was shut off. The legal adjuster made inquiry at the city hall.

"The water contract was signed by the wrong man," the city official said. "We want twenty-five more tickets." He got the tickets and the circus got the water.

In some Indiana towns they have a document called a "quietus" which is a final acquitment from debt. When a circus acquires a quietus from an Indiana city hall its debt to that particular municipality has been paid and there is usually no more trouble on that score, although in Indiana and other states a circus license must be paid for at the state capitol.

### LABOR TROUBLES

Every circus entering Wisconsin is greeted with a letter from the capitol at Madison bluntly stating that if the circus does not instantly comply with the Wisconsin State Compensation Law it will be enjoined from further exhibitions in that state. The letter gives a list of concerns with which the circus may place its workmen's accident insurance. The circus pays, by the nose, but it pays whether it exhibits in that state one or one hundred days.

The absurdity of applying workmen's compensation laws to a travelling circus is apparent when it is known that with the average circus laborer it is "off ag'in, on ag'in, gone ag'in Finnegan." The bosses and a few helpers stick with the circus year in and out and are cared for by the management in case of injury

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*Putting up the big top in short order is not an easy job—even when help is plentiful.*

or illness. But the great bulk of circus helpers are floaters. Many a circus lost many a performance, cut out many a parade or "put the menagerie behind the side wall" instead of trying to erect the menagerie tent last summer—all on account of labor shortage.

Zack Terrell, manager of the Sells-Floto Circus, stood on the lot at De Kalb, Illinois, last autumn, watching his meagre crew wrestle with the big top.

"Why were you in late?" I inquired. "It's a short haul from Freeport—only sixty miles."

"We were in early enough, about six o'clock," he replied. "But we haven't any help. The railroad stole twenty men away from us yesterday and now that school is open we'll have no help from the kids."

Zack got his show up that day—all but the menagerie tent—but it was hard work. The circus misses its juvenile helpers when labor is hard to hold.

### RAMPAGING ELEPHANTS AND MULES

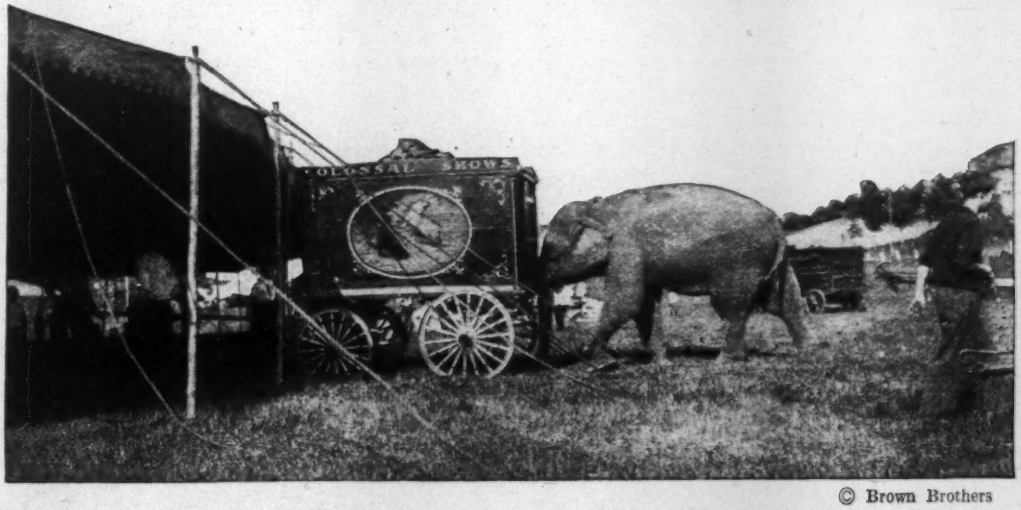
Since the advent of automobiles, elephants do not cause so many runaways, but they will run away themselves. "Tusco," the mammoth elephant with the Barnes Circus ran away twice last season. "Rajah" of the old Lemon Brothers Circus was a "bad bull" and a confirmed runaway. Circus history is filled with stories of runaway "bulls." Each one leaves a hot trail for the legal adjuster. This circus official has many situations to meet.

When the John Robinson Circus exhibited in August, 1922, two mules played havoc with the greens of the Country Club. The golfers could not prove that the offending mules were from the circus, but they sued. The circus gave a bond and departed. Six months later Sam Dill, adjuster for the Robinson Circus called upon the Country Club directors, was entertained at a Rotary Club lunch and, through the offices of a local friend, settled the case without paying damages.

With the adoption of various safety devices danger from falling circus seats is remote, but they do go down occasionally and then there is plenty of work for the legal adjuster. He also has his hands full if the tents blow down. This is also, happily, a rare occurence for modern circus tents have an extra insurance in storm stakes and storm guys or stays and if there is promise of high wind the tents are rapidly emptied and the performance ceases. But every detail must be closely watched with every circus, including the bale ring.

The bale ring is the ring of steel which hangs near the top of every circus center pole. To it are hooked the various sections of canvas and the many pieces of aerial rigging upon which the gymnasts perform. If the ropes which hold the bale ring to the center pole give way or any hook is not securely fastened, trouble follows. Accidents from this cause rarely occur, but Madge Fuller was doing a "cloud swing" near the tent top last season when the hook that held her rigging slipped off the bale ring. She fell forty feet to the ground.

"Luckily," she explains, "I struck




© Brown Brothers

*Elephants are often used to move the heavy circus wagons from railroad to lot.*

the center pole and that broke my fall. I worked the next day."

In the old days before the circus business became highly organized the circus was fair game for the shyster lawyer. If any accident occurred within or without the circus company, or any citizen had a grievance or was tempted to try a shake down, the local lawyer got out an attachment and the circus could not move until it settled. Now each big circus pays an annual fee to some fidelity company. If any legal action impends the local fidelity lawyer is called upon, a bond is given and the circus moves on.

### THE DANGER OF WRECKS

In moving a circus over the road there are plenty of normal risks without looking for avoidable trouble. There is always the risk of train wrecks.

Wrecks on the road are not so common as they used to be. Most modern circus trains are all steel with the latest in safety devices, but the circus owner must always reckon with the human equation. Because of faulty inspection of an elephant car truck the old Barnes Circus was once wrecked between Gouverneur and Potsdam, New York. Two camels and thirty valuable Arabian horses were lost.

The 101 Ranch show was wrecked by a split switch en route to Norfolk, Virginia, and twenty-eight horses were killed. The same cause wrecked the old Barnum Circus in Ohio and killed several men as well as horses. The Walter L. Main Circus train went off the side of a Pennsylvania mountain many years ago and was totally wrecked. Showmen vividly recall the wreck near Gary, Indiana, of the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus, five years ago. Two days afterwards forty victims were buried in a common grave in Chicago and the circus resumed operations in Wisconsin. The show must go on.

### A TYPICALLY AMERICAN INDUSTRY

The enormous amount of information which the circus owner or general agent catalogues in his brain is acquired largely from circus experience, but a good deal also comes from bank and statistical bureau reports and from the sales reports of catalogue houses. And the merchandize managers of many big factories watch the circus business to get a line on trade conditions. If business is good with the circus in any particular part of the country it is pretty sure to be good for other lines of business.

The big circus is an American development essentially. There is nothing like it elsewhere in the world. The American business man has a genius for organization and it requires a supergenius to organize and conduct a big circus successfully. But such an institution would not remain intact year after year if the owners had not mastered the intricate art of what the showman calls "moving the circus into the money." This brings me back to the cryptic remark of the able Charles Sparks:

"Any boob can run a circus. The trick is to know where to put it."

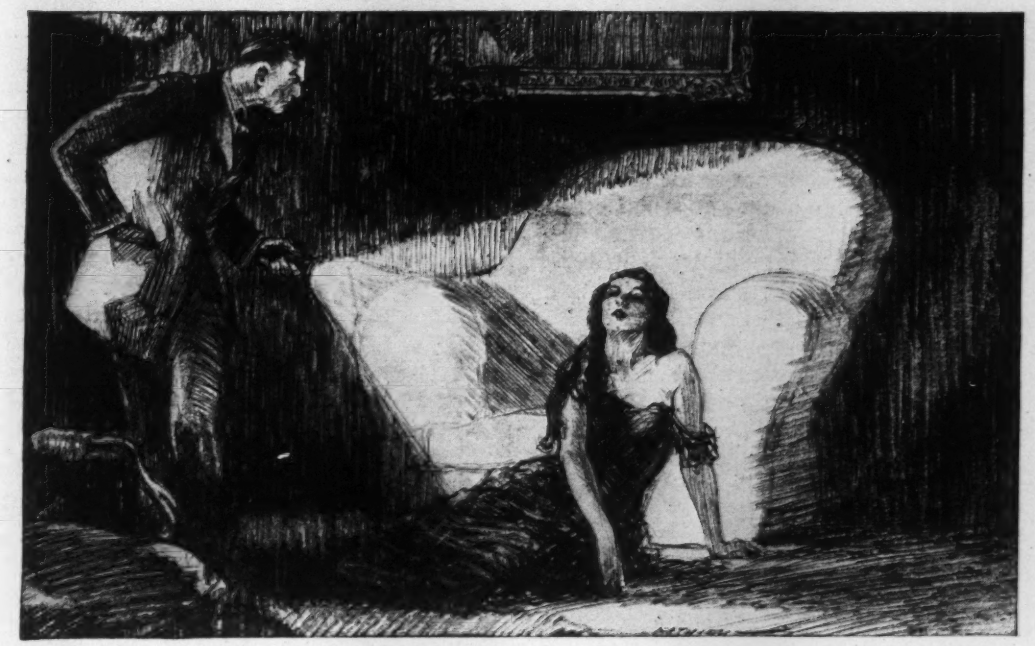
## TO THE GOLDEN EAGLE

*From The Mountainy Singer.*

Wanderer of the mountain,
Winger of the blue,
From this stormy rock
I send my love to you.

Take me for your lover,
Dark and fierce and true—
Wanderer of the mountain,
Winger of the blue!

*Seosamh MacCathmhaoil.*



*Lying in a half-fainting condition on the library floor was a woman.*

# A Jump Ahead of the Cops

*By* James Fellom

*Illustrated by Herbert Mathieu*

I WAS lounging in the detectives' room of the Progressive Police Headquarters reminiscing with McCann and Ryerson—two of the bravest, to hear them tell it—when the Comstock robbery was reported in. It had been a slack day for the police reporter of the Morning Times—meaning myself—so I was in the pink of condition for anything that savored of action and this report surely looked the goods.

In the adjoining room, Night Captain Grimes was snapping out orders over the telephone like a section boss to his gang.

"You say the guests ain't left the house yet? How long ago did this happen? Well if anyone tries to leave kid him along, see! Watch the doors and windows—lock 'em. How's the servants? I get you. All right, I'll send a couple of men right out. G'bye!"

He summoned the two detectives by buzzer and I trailed in after them.

"Beat it out to Amos Comstock's—643 Serpentine Avenue," he said, reading from a pad. "A Mrs. Laughlin lost a diamond necklace, about ten minutes ago. There's a party on. Comstock says the lights went out while they were dancing and somebody yanked the necklace off of her in the dark. Better step easy—it's a million-dollar bunch. Talk it over with Comstock, first. Take the matron along, in case you need her."

I guess it's because my bump of sensationalism is developed out of all normal proportion that I have come to distinguish a big news story by certain earmarks contained in the barest of details; or, perhaps, I have the gift of a sixth sense which slips me the high-sign when a thriller is about to break. I can't say. What I do know is that, as I piled into the machine with McCann and Ryerson and Mrs. Sampton, the police matron, I began to visualize a spread on the first page of the next day's issue of the Times.

The Comstock residence lay on the west side of town, in that section where parlors are referred to as drawing-rooms and at least one member out of every family plays golf. We reached it presently—a beautiful two-story structure; arcade frontage, tile roof, and all that picturesque sort of thing. It stood on a small elevation, a spacious lawn descending from it to the sidewalk in terraces on which the landscape artist had plied his talents with enviable success. A half a dozen or more machines were drawn up before the curb, their chauffeurs gossiping the time away. Lights shone from every window in the house and I could hear a violin droning out Dvorak's Humoresque as we mounted the steps.

The butler, a big lugubrious piece of statuary, conducted us into a small anteroom back of the grand stairway and went to summon his master. From the glimpse I had of the brilliant reception hall on my way in, I was convinced by the demeanor of the guests that they had been kept in ignorance of the robbery.

Amos Comstock, prominent stockholder and director of the Progressville Light and Power Company, was a wiry little man of sixty, all nerves, and with a tongue like the crack of a whip. He greeted us in crisp tones and he let his cold eye linger on me undecidedly for a moment—I was a reporter, you see, and he debated with himself whether to turn me over to the butler person for rapid transit out of the mansion or let me remain and get the facts in the case, since he knew I'd write it up anyway.

"The less said about this thing, the better, young man," he stated at last, though not so threateningly as it sounds.

"Certainly, Mr. Comstock," I agreed pleasantly. There is nothing like being soothingly vague when it's to one's advantage—and, believe me, I wouldn't have missed that session for a week's salary!

Comstock's statement of the robbery didn't add anything to the brief account given by Night Captain Grimes, except that the necklace was valued at thirty thousand dollars, and he fixed the time of the theft at ten o'clock. The mansion had been in darkness no longer than a minute, he judged.

"What is the best way to proceed in this thing?" he asked the detectives. "Mrs. Laughlin was very considerate—came to me privately and reported her loss. We have kept the matter quiet—nobody knows you are here."

"You're sure no one left the house after the robbery?" this from McCann.

"Positive. The fact is, I had taken precautions against this very thing happening—knowing there would be considerable jewelry worn to-night. I had the servants stationed at the entrances and at certain windows where a burglar might force his way in unobserved and instructed them to be on the watch for strange faces or anything that looked suspicious. I'll vouch for the honesty of my servants, gentlemen."

"Then you believe the necklace is still here—that the thief ain't had a chance to beat it? Is that it?" said Ryerson.

"I do. But I don't suspect my guests, understand. There is an Hawaiian five-piece orchestra and two professional entertainers—a man and woman—from San Francisco. I am of the opinion that one of them seized the opportunity, when the lights went out, to snatch off the necklace. Mrs. Laughlin will tell you she was dancing near the orchestra stand when the robbery occurred."

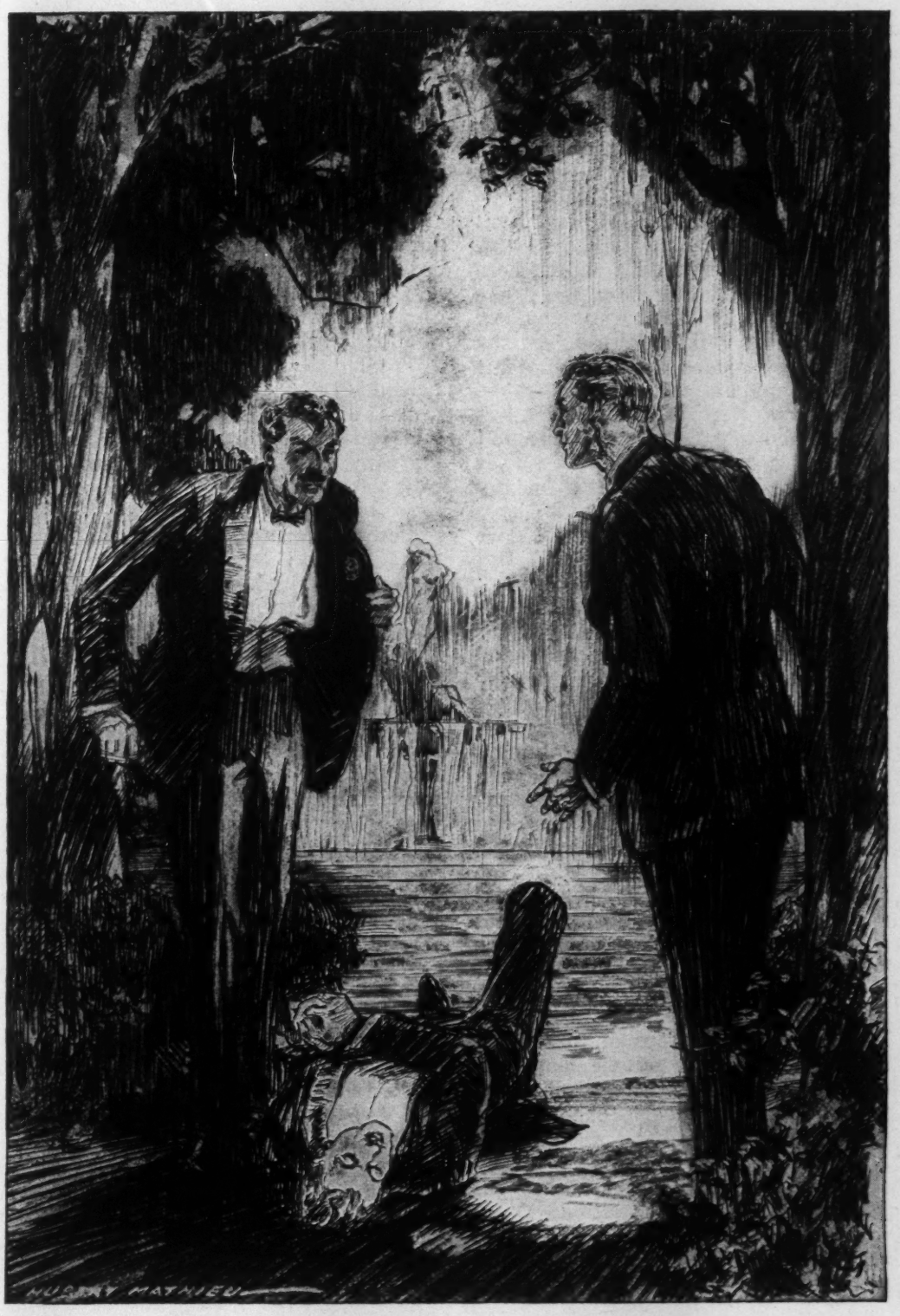
"About the lights going out, Mr. Comstock—did you have any trouble with them earlier in the evening?"

"A little. They flickered once or twice, but not to the extent of making me think that gas light was necessary."

"You've got it on, now, of course?" remarked McCann dryly.

"In the reception hall—yes."

There were twenty-eight guests, according to the list which Comstock turned over to the detectives. With the exception of six, all were people prominent in local business and social circles—their activities actually helped keep the Times' society section in existence. The six strangers, as Comstock explained, were: James A. Shane and his sister, Mrs. Anna Caldwell, both bugs on curios; Mr. and Mrs. H. Stephen Copeland, recent New York arrivals—Copeland was a manufacturer of synthetic stones; and Mr. and Mrs. Lewiston G. Mailry, residents of Salt Lake City. The first four had been highly recommended to Comstock by mutual friends, while the Mailrys had come as the guests of Attorney Walter Spaulding.




*"Here's the thief that's been keeping you birds guessing. I had to put him out—he's a tough brute."*

Mrs. Henry Laughlin, a vivacious, young matron — downcast, now — was summoned before the detectives and told her story. She had been dancing with Attorney Spaulding, she said, and, the instant the lights went out, a hand had clutched the string of diamonds from behind and torn it from around her neck. She hadn't screamed—showing unusual bravery, I thought.

She was positive Spaulding had been holding her in dancing position—arm about her, his other hand grasping hers —at the time. Asked by McCann if she remembered what couples were near her when the electrics blazed up again, she unhesitatingly named a banker and his wife, and Copeland and Mrs. Comstock. The orchestra stand, she said, was less than a yard away from where she and Spaulding stood, and, she believed, it would have been an easy matter for any one of the Hawaiian musicians to have reached out through the decorative greenery and seized the necklace. But whether it was a man or woman's hand she had felt against her skin, she couldn't say, though she displayed the marks of fingernails on her neck and shoulder where the thief had fumbled for one brief second.

I was seated near the door, getting an earful, and wondering how Mrs. Laughlin had kidded her husband—his penuriousness was notorious—into sinking thirty thousand dollars in a diamond necklace, when the unexpected happened —out went the lights! They didn't go out, however, as is the case when they're snapped off—that is, abruptly—but after a number of efforts to burn, which would have convinced the average user of electricity that something was wrong at the power-house.

I was the first one out of that room. The orchestra had just put the last flourishing note to a waltz as I reached the reception-hall entrance. The dancers were encoring vigorously, getting a kick out of the moonlight effect created by the yellow glow of a few bracket gas jets.

Suddenly the terrified screams of a woman rang through the mansion, followed by the sounds of a furious scuffle, a heavy fall and more screams. I heard a man shout, "Thief! Thief!" and dashing through the dark drawing-room across the way from the reception-hall, flashlight in one hand, automatic in the other, I made for the spot.

Lying in a half-fainting condition on the library floor was a woman—Mrs. Anna Caldwell. Her beautiful gown was torn half off her back and her hair hung in ungraceful disorder upon her shoulders. As she later explained, she had entered the room alone, a few minutes before, and was glancing over some rare old books when the place was plunged in darkness. The next moment a man's hand had whipped off a jewel pendant and brooch she was wearing. She had grappled with him and been struck to the floor by a blow on the head, she said.

The house was in an uproar by now. I could hear Comstock snapping out words of reassurance to his guests. McCann and Ryerson, flashlights blazing, came dashing in by way of the drawing-rooms as I sprang out the door leading into the hall.

You see, contrary to the prevailing notion, I wasn't for blaming the power-house for the singular behavior of the lights. I had a sneaking idea that human cunning was at the bottom of the trouble—that somebody had pulled a switch or cut off the current in some manner, while an accomplice turned the trick.

Just outside the library door I bumped into the stiff, putty-faced butler hastily arranging his tie and smoothing back his hair. He was breathing hard and his left cheek-bone was bruised red.

"She handled you rough, eh, kid?" I said bluntly, holding my revolver on him. "Come on—stick them up!" referring to his hands.

"I—I—he struck me, sir—knocked me down. I was in the dining-room when she screamed and—we ran into each other in the dark, sir. I was unprepared, and—he got away," he rattled off breathlessly.

I eyed him closely: he was badly shaken up.

"Which way did he go?"

"I'm not sure, sir, but I think into the reception hall or conservatory—that door leads into both."

I doubted the fellow's story, but I wasn't stopping just then to tell him so. The lights hadn't come on, yet, and I wanted first of all to satisfy my suspicion that somebody had extinguished them—and catch the person redhanded.

"Where's the electric switch-board?"

"In—in the short hallway to the right—the fourth door," pointing toward the rear of the mansion. "I'll show you, sir."

"Never mind. Get in there!" I ordered, hustling him into the library.

McCann came hurrying up at this juncture and I turned the suspect over to him.

"Put this bird over the hurdles, Mac, he's been in a battle," I whispered, as I darted off.

The hallway proved to be a rather wide passageway, perhaps twelve feet or so in length, leading onto a spacious sun-porch as well as giving access to the servants' stairs, as I very shortly found out. The door into it was open and—Funny how a man, knowing better, will occasionally overlook the very thing he shouldn't.

I simply forgot to think what could have been—was, in fact—behind that open door. All I saw at the moment was the built-in, cupboard-like affair in the wall which usually contains a switch-board—and nobody in sight. In I went and I hadn't more than got clear of the door, when—zowie—I caught a straight-arm drive under the right ear that piled me in a heap at the far end of the passage. My automatic flew in one direction and my flash in another; and, to make matters worse, the latter went out of commission as it struck the floor, depriving me of the opportunity of getting so much as a glimpse of my assailant.

I lay where I fell, groggy, trying desperately to rally my sense. I heard the door into the main hall close and the key turn—a moment of quick whispering. Then a cautious foot touched my leg, as somebody stepped over me and opened the door leading onto the sun-porch. Directly after a woman's skirt brushed across me and, by sheer force of will, I reached out my hand and closed my fingers on the first thing they encountered—a feathery fan.

A frightened gasp broke from its owner. She made one frantic effort to wrench the fan from me, then let go of it and fled. Silence fell, punctuated only by the sounds of excitement prevailing in the library.

My head began to clear presently and I got unsteadily to my feet. My flash was dead, but I remembered the switch-board and, groping for it in the darkness, finally found the main switch—pulled out, as I had suspected. I threw it into place and, as the lights flashed up in the sun-porch, snatched my automatic off the floor and glanced inside.

But my assailant and his companion had escaped, either through an entrance which led into the conservatory, or into an apartment adjoining the reception hall. I met Ryerson hurrying in from the conservatory and told him what I'd run up against.

"Mrs. Comstock just reported losing that," he said, as he looked the fan over with his gimlet eyes. "Slick little workers, these birds. But we'll hook 'em. They're setting pretty just now—Let's see where he swung on you. Some haymaker, I'll tell the world! Say, Lest, that butler is the wise owl. We'll have to take him in and limber up his tongue with a little shot of razzmajazz——"

"After the wallop I got, Ryerson, I'm ready to swear the poor boob bumped into the same fist I did," I said bitterly.

The detective grinned skeptically.

"Is that so? Well, you've got your dope mixed, son. This gink's one of the gang—see if I ain't right."

He continued on through the house and I went back and, picking up my flash, started for the library. The police matron, Mrs. Sampton, sat guarding the butler, now handcuffed. From the way the fellow glared at me I could easily see my finish did he ever meet me in the dark. McCann was upstairs and, as I learned from the matron, the two sleuths were searching the premises and ordering everyone into the reception hall.

Thither I went and, stopping in the entrance, looked over the crowd. It was a brilliant spectacle, notwithstanding the fact that the spirits of the guests had been considerably dampened by the mysterious occurrences of the last hour. A few yards away Comstock stood talking in low earnest tones to a local capitalist and a superior court judge.

While I waited for a chance to beckon him over and return the fan to him, Henry Laughlin—husband of the woman who had lost the diamond necklace—approached, accompanied by a tall, blonde man of perhaps thirty and a pretty young thing of the clinging-vine variety, attired in a silver-and-gold creation that made me sit up and take notice.

"Mr. Manning," said Laughlin, whom I knew quite well, "I want you to meet Mr. and Mrs. Mailry of Salt Lake City. They are very old friends of Attorney Spaulding–Walt Spaulding, you know."

I acknowledged the introduction.

"Mr. Laughlin was telling us of your remarkable success at solving crime mysteries and, of course, we were interested," smiled Mrs. Mailry.

"I fear he gives me credit to which I am not in the least entitled," I replied.

"My wife was a special writer at one time and is naturally just a little proud of the men and women of the craft who do things," explained Mailry pleasantly.

"Indeed. What paper?" I looked at the woman as I spoke. She was standing next to me—on my right.

"The Chicago Sun-Gazette. I was a sob-sister, and the editor used to say that the type-setters donned rubber boots and slickers when they handled my stories, to keep from getting drenched—tears, you understand." She laughed.

We discussed the robberies for a few minutes, until Comstock joined us and I availed myself of the opportunity to give him the fan, stating simply that I had found it in one of the rooms and heard it belonged to his wife.

Presently Ryerson and McCann appeared and held a brief consultation with Comstock, the capitalist and the superior court judge. You see there was only one way of going at the mystery—the police could do nothing under the circumstances—which held out any assurance of catching the thieves. This Comstock now did. He addressed the gathering, thus:

"Friends, two daring thefts have occurred here, to-night, and I regret to say the culprits are still in this house. This is a most embarrassing moment for me, ladies and gentlemen, for the security which should have been yours, as my guests, under my roof, has proved futile. Unfortunately there seems to be but one method by which——"

*Dumfounded, I stared at them. Who could have slipped them into my pocket?*

He paused for a word and the superior court judge, taking his cue, diplomatically broke the ice.

"I believe there is not a man or woman in this assemblage but feels for you, Mr. Comstock, and is like myself willing to waive the question of personal delicacy in the matter and submit to being searched."

"A very laudable suggestion, judge," chimed in the capitalist. "It's an ugly thing to say, ladies and gentlemen, but if we depart from here without making an effort to establish our innocence, suspicion will rest equally on everyone of us."

It was a sympathetic crowd and not averse to the program—even to the musicians and entertainers. I now waited for an indignant protest from someone—that someone would be the thief with the jewelry still in his possession. An arrest would certainly follow.

The women were ushered upstairs under the chaperonage of the police matron, while the detectives herded the men into one of the drawing-rooms. And the amazing feature of the proceeding was that not a voice was raised in protest!

I was mystified, disappointed. Then and there I could have predicted the search a failure. McCann and Ryerson, too, looked baffled, and Comstock's face was a study. As to what had become of the jewelry, it was more than likely the crooks had either hidden it in the man-

sion pending the moment of their departure, or contrived to toss it out of a window, or else the servants were not so trustworthy as Comstock believed.

Turning from the now deserted reception hall, I made my way into the library to smoke and puzzle over what seemed on its face about as daring and successful a robbery as the Progressville Police Department had wrestled with in years. As I reached into the right-hand pocket of my coat after my package of cigarettes, I found the stolen valuables—diamond necklace, diamond pendant and a platinum brooch set with sapphires and pearls!

Dumbfounded, I stared at them. My first thought was—who could have slipped them into my pocket? Instantly I remembered talking with Laughlin and the Mailrys—Mrs. Mailry had been standing on my right, rather near to me. But she had stepped aside when Comstock came up. Perhaps the butler had managed to rid himself of them when I encountered him in the hall. Again, perhaps, the unknown man and woman had planted the evidence on me as I lay half dazed on the floor of the passageway. I couldn't be sure.

But, believe me, I was elated over my discovery because, in one inspirational moment, I saw through the whole scheme and realized how I could, by taking a risk, bring about the capture of its author.

Briefly, the mysterious thief, surprised by the presence of the police and anticipating a search, had lost no time in getting rid of his plunder. Reasoning that since I was a reporter I would escape investigation, he had made me its custodian. If I discovered it and turned it over to the officers, the thefts would remain a mystery; if I didn't discover it, which was possible, I could be tracked from the house, held up and robbed—a handkerchief mask could be used with good effect—and, being unaware of the contents of my pocket, I would never surmise the motive back of the hold-up.

In other words, someone had picked me to be the goat. And that's just what I proposed to be. I would keep my discovery secret and lure this person, or persons, into a trap.

Meanwhile, what was I to do with the jewelry? It represented, I felt confident, as much as $50,000. I hesitated to conceal it on the premises, as I wasn't so sure that it would be safe. I decided to take it along with me, and, accordingly, slipped it into one of my socks—not a very romantic hiding-place, I'll admit, but one which had proved its value to me in the past. Then I finished my smoke and strolled out into the hall.

The party broke up, following the unsuccessful search by the police; there were unknown robbers in the mansion and that appalling fact sufficed to drive the women guests home. McCann and Ryerson, surly and beaten, were peering into the musicians' instruments and cases as industriously as a pair of prohibition officers after boot-leg.

I looked at Mrs. Comstock sweetly bidding good-night to her guests and saw that she had her fan. She seemed pale, agitated, I thought. There were six strangers among the invited ones you'll remember. I gave them the once-over. Shane, the curio gatherer, lingered on talking with Attorney Spaulding who had been dancing with Mrs. Laughlin when she lost her necklace; Mr. and Mrs. Copeland of synthetic jewel fame were among the first to depart; Mr. and Mrs. Mailry stood a few paces away from me, listening to Mrs. Caldwell's story of her struggle with her mysterious assailant.

Believe me or not, I was dead certain I was being closely watched but I couldn't get a line on anyone—except the butler. Comstock, it appears, had gone to the bat for him—stood responsible for him, you understand—and the fellow had been released from custody.

The crowd was getting pretty well thinned out and, procuring my hat and overcoat, I went over and told Ryerson I couldn't wait to ride back with them, but would take a street-car instead. As I was going out, Comstock came up.

"Mr. Manning, there are certain details in connection with this wretched affair which I'd like kept out of the Times. Could you spare me a few minutes? I'll be at liberty, presently."

I consented, reluctantly enough; for adventure had me in its grip and I was keen to find out if my theory of a hold-up was correct.

The last guest had gone, as well as the police, when Comstock led the way into the little room under the grand stairway, offered me a cigar, lit one himself and, sitting opposite, fixed me with

his bright, penetrating, black eyes.

"A man is waiting outside for you, Mr. Manning, to rob you of the stolen valuables you have hidden in your sock. If you'll give them to me, I'll see that they are returned to their owners," he said, in slow quiet tones.

I never batted an eye.

"Then you know who robbed your guests? Why didn't you notify the police? Who is this man?" I asked.

"An explanation is hardly necessary. I'll trouble you for the jewelry, Mr. Manning. I am responsible to my guests, and—you haven't the constitutional authority to withhold it."

I studied him narrowly for a moment. His thin face was bloodless, drawn with determination. I continued to stall him—something about him puzzled me.

"Judging from your words, you're more interested in getting this plunder than in the capture of the thief."

"I am."

"Why, may I ask?"

"That is none of your business."

I didn't press the issue, but took another tack.

"Of course, you realize the case is in the hands of the police—no need to tell you that I assist them whenever I can. If, however, you insist that I turn these valuables over to you, I'll do it—but only in the presence of an officer. Ring up the station and——"

"You've heard my request. Will you comply with it or not?"

I did some tall thinking before I answered him. As I have said, I didn't like his attitude in the matter—for one thing, it now appeared as if he were endeavoring to shield the criminal.

"I am sorry, Mr. Comstock, but if we can't reach a compromise, you, or the owners of this jewelry, will have to call at police headquarters for it."

He rose abruptly from his chair. His eyes were flashing with a furious fire. Just what he intended doing, however, I never found out, for, at this dramatic moment, there was a sudden commotion out in the hall, followed by the hysterical voice of a woman crying for help.

Comstock sprang to the door and threw it open. I was right at his heels as he stepped out of the room and, glancing toward the front entrance, I saw Mrs. Mailry standing there, her face ghostly, torn with terror.

"Lewis—Lewis is being—murdered," she choked, as I reached her side. "A man—out in the garden—I—my God, Mr. Manning—my husband——"

I was on the veranda before she finished speaking. The light from the corner street arc shone brightly on the terraced lawn, the clumps of shrubbery casting long ragged shadows across the grass. In one of these shadows, to one side of the walk and about half way between the house and the street, two men were fighting desperately.

Even as I caught sight of them and rushed down the steps, revolver in hand, one of them dealt his adversary two swift, crushing blows on the head, dropping him to the ground. That slowed me to a walk—I wasn't sure who the victor was. But I kept on advancing, watching him, my weapon covering him. I saw him stoop and presently, to my surprise, made out that he was handcuffing the other—handcuffs meant an officer.

He was just straightening up when I stopped before him. It was Shane, the rich curio gatherer. He peered hard at me a moment.

"You're the Times reporter, Manning, aren't you—we were introduced in there? Well, here's the thief that's been keeping you birds guessing. I had to put him out—he's a tough brute. Them two dicks couldn't catch the measles." He brushed his clothes as he spoke.

I glanced at the unconscious man.

"Who is he?" I asked, knowing well enough yet hardly able to puzzle out the strange turn affairs had taken.

"Lewiston Mailry, alias Big Pete Desoto, society crook, and slick as a fox. Some catch, brother. Say, you can mention me in the story, if you want to—Detective Art Long of Frisco." He threw back his lapel to display his shield. "Comstock phoned my agency—saying they'd be a bunch of jewelry on parade to-night—and I come. He's a fast little worker," with a look at the motionless form, "and I didn't get a line on him till I see his jane slip you the swag. If you'll stay and keep an eye on him, I'll go in and get her before she sneaks."

He took a step toward the mansion, then abruptly faced me again.

"You'd better let me take that evidence, Manning, and I'll have Comstock put it in his safe, over night. Not that I doubt your honesty, old man——"

"I get you, sport. But I'm turning it in to Night Captain Grimes—it's safer.

His eyes blazed and he strode threateningly up to me.

"The local department ain't horning in on my game, see? This is my catch and I want the credit. Come across with that jewelry——"

I whipped out my automatic suddenly.

"Pretty raw stuff you're trying to pull, pal," I began, and the rest of the words died in my throat.

For, at this juncture, a shot rang out from the shrubbery back of me and a bullet fairly burned my ear. As I dropped to my knees, expecting a fusillade, I saw Shane stagger and fall.

Mailry had regained consciousness and was making futile efforts to get to his feet, speaking in thick disconnected tones. I could hear Comstock shouting from the veranda, but I never did know what he said. I caught the patter of feet down the walk and sprang up in time to see a woman fleeing like the wind for the street. A revolver glinted in her hand. Instantly I was in pursuit and overtook her just as she stepped into a machine parked half a block away.

"Well, go on—why the hesitation?" asked "Barnacles" Thurston, the Times waterfront reporter.

It was several hours after my adventures in the Comstock mansion, and my journalistic sidekicker and I were eating ham-and-eggs at a table in Java Jake's.

"That's suspense, not hesitation, Old Salt," I replied easily.

"Of course, Mailry and his wife were the crooks, and she shot Shane for pinching her husband. But how did they pull off the robberies and——"

"No. Get this straight, now, before I explain how it happened: Mailry was a private detective Comstock had hired for the occasion through Attorney Spaulding—the dick has a bureau in Frisco and Spaulding attends to his legal work here. Mailry, in order to make his identity the more secure, attended the racket with his wife as Spaulding's guests—even Comstock did not know him, didn't believe he was on the job.

"Shane," I went on after a brief pause, "was one of the crooks. His moniker in the East is Pittsburg Johnny Cochrane. I got suspicious of him when he threw back his lapel to show me his shield. I noticed it was pinned *upside down.* You see, as I ran up after his battle with Mailry, he had had time to snatch off Mailry's shield and pin it on, grab the latter's gun and manacle him with his own handcuffs. Then he posed to me as Art Long—whom I know—feeling certain I'd turn the swag over.

"The other crook was the woman who shot Shane—just wounded him in the head, by the way. I nabbed her as she sprang in the machine and recognized her as Mrs. Caldwell—the woman who lost the pendant and brooch. She's another slicker, known to the police as Lucille Morgan. She saw me pull my gun on Shane and believing I was about to make him prisoner—which I was—fired at me. If she had aimed a little to the left, she'd have got me. As it was she winged her accomplice."

I stopped to drain my cup of coffee.

"Now, as to how the pair did it: Some time ago they saw in a Frisco paper where Amos Comstock had purchased a number of rare old volumes for his collection, for a sum in five figures, and they decided to take a little jaunt down here and see what they might relieve Comstock of besides books.

"They contrived, finally, to forge a letter of introduction, supposedly written by a prominent Frisco broker—close friend of Comstock—in which they referred to themselves as brother and sister, members of Illinois blueblood stock and bugs on curios. Comstock fell—and they became his guests.

"That was yesterday. Then they heard about to-night's party and began to get visions of a rich haul. They figured they could work it on the side without attracting the least suspicion.

"Around the dinner hour this evening, there had been trouble with the electric lights and Shane conceived the idea of using it to his advantage in conducting his robberies. He arranged with Mrs. Caldwell, that, at the end of every *waltz,* he would switch off the lights and she, having spotted her victim, would be in position to reach out for the jewelry. At the end of two minutes the lights would go on again, time enough having elapsed for Mrs. Caldwell to dispose of the swag on her person.

"The first shot out of the box she hooks the Laughlin necklace. It's a big haul and she knows it. She was dancing

with Comstock at the time and when he leaves her to speak with Mrs. Laughlin, she follows him and hears that he is sending for the police.

"But Mailry is now on the job and for some reason he suspects the butler of the theft. The headquarters men and Mrs. Sampton and I are closeted with Comstock, when Mrs. Caldwell and Shane—becoming leary that they might get in a jam—put over the bold ruse that is sure to free them of all suspicion.

"The woman turns over her pendant and brooch to Shane, and when she is alone in the library, he switches off the lights, and Mrs. Caldwell deliberately tears her gown, uncoils her hair, makes a noise like a scuffle, screams and falls to the floor. The butler, rushing for the scene, collides with Mailry in the darkness—the latter swinging on him.

"The butler, however, manages to evade him, calling 'Thief!' at the top of his voice. Mailry, realizing his mistake, makes for the passageway where the switch-board is. His wife, following his instructions, has come around through the sun-porch. They meet, but Shane has escaped upstairs.

"Just about this time I'm hotfooting it down the hall—after my capture of the butler. They hear me coming and, believing I'm the thief, they wait back of the door and Mailry again uses his fists. I now know he knocked me groggy—just long enough for him to find out from my police badge that I was a reporter. Not relishing an embarrassing explanation, they beat it. Mrs. Mailry found the fan in the conservatory where Mrs. Comstock had forgotten it and intended returning it to its owner."

"But how do you explain Comstock's suspicious actions when he asked you for the stolen jewelry and how did he know you had it?" said Barnacles, as I paused.

"Nothing more than that he took that means of killing the story. He figured that if he could get possession of the jewelry, I would be unable to write up the robbery—as no robbery would have occurred. Strong-arm tactics, but certain of success had I obeyed his demand.

"He knew I had the swag because the butler told him so. The latter was standing in the hall watching me when I found the gems in my pocket, noted my surprise and saw me hide them in my sock. Comstock, knowing who I was, came to the same conclusion that I had—that the thief was using me to transport the swag out of the house with the object of waylaying me later.

"Shane says he picked me for his safe-deposit box, when he found the police were going to frisk the crowd. He learned I was a reporter and would doubtless escape being searched and contrived to drop the jewelry into my pocket where I stood in the reception hall.

"To Mrs. Mailry goes the credit of picking up the clew that led to Shane's capture. You will remember I said that while I stood in the hall watching the guests depart, I was dead certain I was being closely watched. Well, Shane was speaking with Attorney Spaulding at the time and Mrs. Mailry just happened to notice that the fellow kept looking at me queerly. It aroused her suspicions.

"She told her husband and he decided to keep his eye on Shane. He waited outside in the shadow of the veranda and presently saw Shane and Mrs. Caldwell come out and stroll down the walk. When they reached the clump of shrubbery the man suddenly dodged out of sight—the woman continuing on alone.

"Mailry then approached Shane, surprised him, and began questioning him. The fellow, finding himself in a jam, attacked Mailry and laid him out. He would have done the same to me and frisked me for the jewelry had not Mrs. Mailry raised an alarm. Instead he figured on another bold move—posing as a detective, getting the swag from me and beating it. Mrs. Caldwell, fearing I would hold him and turn him over to the police, shot at me. Then she made for the machine which they had ordered earlier in the evening, in the event they had to make a quick getaway."

I stopped speaking. Barnacles blew a cloud of smoke ceilingwards.

"Some swell little adventure, I must say," he said with a grin. "I suppose Old Tightwad Laughlin offered you a cigar as reward for retrieving his wife's thirty-thousand-dollar——"

"Ah, that's the kick of the night," I interrupted. "That swell Laughlin necklace, as well as Mrs. Caldwell's classy pendant and brooch, was—paste."

"Phony?" Barnacles was incredulous.

"The ayes have it!" I grinned. "Another cup of java, Jake!" I called.

# LETTERS ABOUT THE KU KLUX KLAN ARTICLES

## IN MCCLURE'S MAGAZINE FOR MAY

April 27th, 1924.

Editor,
McClure Press, Inc.,
76–88 Lafayette Street,
New York City.
Dear Sir:

. . . Also, if I am not mistaken, there are quite a number of your readers that will resent such disgusting nonsense and will cease to be a reader and a subscriber to your magazine, like I intend to do myself, although I have been a constant reader for nearly four years.

Without a doubt MAX is of the Hebrew stock.

Sincerely,
A 100% AMERICAN KLANSMAN.

You have my permission to PUBLISH THIS *IF YOU CARE TO.*

---

April 28th, 1924.
East St. Louis, Illinois.

McClure's Magazine,
New York City, N. Y.

. . . The K. K. K. is an absolute protestant organization they stand for real Christianity and protest against supreme of Church as some do. The K. K. K. is organized for the purpose of protecting the protestant people and protestant churches. Just the same as the K. of C. is for the Catholic people Catholic churches. become necessary for the Protestant people organize for their protection as the Catholics had organized against them. this is the whole truth of the afair.

*Now I do not want* your magazine to enter my home. stop it. I do not want no false reading. its not welcome.

W. A. Adcox.

Plainview, Texas.
May 2nd, 1924.

Editor McClure's Magazine,
My dear Sir:

I have just read the tirade against the Ku Klux Klan in your May issue, by one Max Bentley, formerly of Texas, in which he maligns, misrepresents, defames and slanders one of the greatest fraternal organizations in America. His information is wholly unreliable and his charges are maliciously false. He is like a heathen trying to write about the Christian religion—he knows absolutely nothing about his subject.

By way of introduction, permit me to say that I am a minister and a Klan official. . . .

Yours very truly,
W. C. Wright
Exalted Cyclops.

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Your edition of May magazine denouncing the Ku Klux klan has thoroughly discusted myself and many others of this town. I am a protestant but do not belong to the Klan, since reading your story I am anxious to join just to find out if what you printed has any foundation, if they will except me.

Chester A. Wright

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*Editorial Note*

It might be enlightening to add to an honest marshalling of facts—not that it matters—that Mr. Bentley is a Texas-born and reared, white Gentile Protestant, the son of an organizer of the Ku Klux Klan of the Reconstruction era. He has had the most intimate personal knowledge of klan operations in his native state from the day of its organization to the present time.

S. S. MCCLURE.

*Quite a difference between this modern set and that of the days when kitchen utensils were painted on the walls.*

# FILM FLAM

*By* BELLE COOLEY TAYLOR

WHEN I telephoned Miss Perkins for an interview she said yes with amazing alacrity. Amazing because every one connected with pictures and papers knows how busy she is. I have seen her often on the streets of Los Angeles. Other people may doll themselves up and ride around in king blue sedans lined with flowered cretonne, but Miss Perkins drives a dark gray roadster and never even uses a lip stick.

Out at the lot I found her established in a rose-vined bungalow just like the stars, only she sat behind a typewriter instead of a make-up shelf.

I remarked about this just by way of opening conversation and she answered me absently—oh yes—she liked the quiet of the bungalow better than the wire cages in the main office—she could think better——

I made a wise crack about thinking being an uncommon form of amusement on the lot and she looked at me with an impish grin.

"We do a lot of thinking out here—tall thinking."

As she spoke she rummaged the top drawer of her desk and drew out a stack of neat little manuscripts.

"Have you any particular star in mind?" she asked. "I have a supply of interviews from all of them."

I explained to her that that was not what I wanted, talking quickly because she gave a rather wild glance at the work piled around her. She writes cleverly for the stars of the K. Y. B., but I wanted to get away from the stars. What I wanted was a statement from Miss Perkins herself—Miss Perkins, head scenario editor and press agent for one of the biggest motion picture companies in the country, and I told her so.

"But why? Why pick on me? Who would be interested in my line?"

As she replaced the papers in the drawer, I told her that people were interested in women who had made successes in unusual lines of work—that it was her duty to other strugglers to give them a lift along the way—finally saying I was a bit of a struggler myself and I needed copy—badly.

She understood that language, and left her desk to sit before me in one of the comfortable lounge chairs.

"Sure," she said, "I'll tell you my story, but don't kid yourself that it will be any help to youngsters, and it won't be faked up either. Lordy me! What a relief to tell the truth for a change, instead of the 'grand old family disgraced by my going into the movies, so I adopted the name of Dolly Dimples' stuff.

"And get it first of all that I did not work faithfully and devote myself to my art until my talents got recognized. I won my first success just like most folks do, sheer accident or fluke, and in any case it was fluke—bunco.

"I got my start back in the times when pictures were not quite respectable. When a producing company was organized the only formality was to go down by the Hudson River docks, rent an old warehouse, call it a studio, and start shooting pictures.

"As you came in to-day did you see the van loads of things being unloaded for our new feature 'Sapphire Poppies?' Well, I wish you could have seen the property room in our old shop! Everything we thought we could use from artificial flowers and a grandfather's clock to a plate of rubber doughnuts—in case we had to serve refreshments in a society scene.

"Some of our best known stars to-day were driven by necessity to work in the movies those days, and for little more than their board and keep—no princely homes in Beverly Hills you know—just a furnished room somewhere up in the forties, with meals wherever they happened to find a cheap lunch room. And those were the days of five cent pieces of pie, five cent ice cream sodas and five cent beer. But we always fed the actors at noon—had their lunch sent over from a longshoreman's saloon across the street.

"Griffith was directing around the corner at the old Biograph and little Jack Pickford was bumping over the cobblestones on his first bicycle. It sure did seem a shame to make that kid come in and go to work.

"At that time there was one fine salary pulled down—Pearl White was getting a hundred and fifty dollars a week, and when her part called for her to jump off a ferry boat, Pearl jumped off—in person.

"Though as far as the salaries went they all looked big to me. I was working as stenographer for Davall and Doner, and every Saturday night I found eight whole dollars in my pay envelope.

"Anyone coming into our office

*When the studio was in an old warehouse on the river front private houses had to be borrowed for such little scenes.*

might have thought we did nothing but read novels, and we did read hundreds of them, hunting situations for our films.

"We had a little stock company and we ground out pictures by the dozen. If a story called for a kitchen we set up the scenery with tin pans painted on the walls and got the old kitchen stove from the property room. If the tale depicted life in high society the wardrobe woman dragged out a bunch of ball gowns that might have been in Noah's ark—and for the outside stuff we went up on Riverside Drive and stole a few door-step scenes.

"Doner was a wizard at grabbing things out of the daily papers. One of the best things we ever did came out of a murder case on Long Island. A woman patient was shot in a doctor's office, the doctor having seen only the barrel of a pistol as it came through a smashed pane of glass. Doner used that situation, but he had the hand drop the pistol inside the window, and of course the hero did the usual hero sap-head trick of blundering in and standing beside the smoking gun and looking bewildered. Doner convicted him, and before his innocence was established he took him all the way to the electric chair and strapped him in. Court proceedings were a yip in those days—and the dear g. public got a grand idea of what the death chamber looked like—not.

"But of course most of our stories came out of the mails—manuscripts sent in. Davall and Doner used to go over them like rats over rafters, steal everything in them, and jumble the situations up in different films. It was my sweet little job to send them all back with a note that they wouldn't do, but would the author submit us his next one? And the authors did—actors not being the only fatheads in the world.

"It was pretty hard sledding for me in those days. Ma and I lived in an awful little flat up in Harlem. Ma had her widow's pension and I had my eight dollars per. On Sundays we used to get extravagant and take a bus ride to Washington Square—and then walk home.

"Poor Ma! It was the dream of her life to have a house in the country where she could keep a few hens.

"And maybe it wasn't a happy day when I bought her that sweet little place on Long Isalnd! I only wish that the rush to the Hollywood gold fields had started earlier. Wouldn't Ma have enjoyed these roses as big as bowls?"

Miss Perkins shook moisture from her eyes as a man came to ask for some continuity, and she opened up a file and got it for him. When she came back all traces of sentiment were gone and she started in briskly.

"'Came a day' as we say in the films, when we started to run out of story material. Bennie went up to the library for a fresh batch of novels. Davall and Doner chewed cigar stubs and turned round and round on their squeaky old office chairs while they cudgeled their brains, and I slipped out into the studio to look things over.

"The carpenters were changing a set when I went out, and Harris was pacing back and forth cussing them. He was our director then—laying the foundation for the big success he has had since—and too bad he couldn't have screened some of his oath creations. What he didn't already know along that line he picked up from the stevedores in the saloon across the way.

"As soon as he saw me he started telling me his troubles—crabbing seeming to run in this business. He claimed he needed more room in order to do himself justice, and it was funny to hear him howl about the management wasting his valuable time. You see I typed the pay roll each week.

"I tried to salve him down and he began telling me what kind of picture he would like to direct if he had a free hand. He wanted to do costume stuff. The management never would stand for it on account of the expense, but that was his dream—a costume picture with a lot of battle scenes!

"Some way he started a little agitation in my mind, more like a restlessness than a thought, and so the next time I had an idle moment I went out to talk to our leading man. He was a haughty creature who bit his nails if he got real mad, but when I started feeding him taffy he thawed like a frozen dish rag under a hot faucet.

"He was a handsome devil, too—he is yet, for all that—but under the mercury light he looked like something found floating off the river front.

"He ran true to form by starting a

tirade against the one next in authority above him—Harris. He said Harris never gave him a chance—that the leading woman always hogged the center—faced the camera.

"Now when Harris had spoken about costume stuff I knew it had to be historical, and the only history I knew about was United States, and only what little of that I had been able to pick up in the grammar grades, so that the first battle that popped into my head was the battle of Bunker Hill.

"And that was why I asked the leading man if he had ever done anything in a colonial costume. He looked at me with such accusation in his big calf eyes that I thought at first I had offended him, but nothing like it!

" 'You've seen it too?' he asked me.

" 'What?' I said, not a little startled.

" 'My resemblance to the Nathan Hale statue,' he replied.

"And then he urged me not to feel badly about it—I haven't the least doubt I looked fit to choke—and he said it meant so much to have someone in the office realize what a fellow was trying to do.

*Pearl White was the only one who had a magnificent salary — $150.00 a week.*

"And right then and there, like whoever it was that sprang full-armed out of the head of what's-his-name, the idea of my first big film came to me. And it was so simple I wondered no one had ever thought of it before.

"I wanted to be alone to plan the thing out, so I was glad that Harris came along just then, hunting his leading man with a lot of blankety-blanks. I calmed him down by taking the blame—said we had been talking about credit slips. Harris gave me a little pat on the shoulder—we had grown quite chummy since he knew I sympathized with his secret ambitions.

" 'That's all right, Miss Perkins,' he said, 'I don't blame you in the least. These actors are a tricky bunch.'

"On my way home that evening I stopped at the neighborhood library and got some books on United States History—there was darned little competition for them—and that night and many nights afterward I burned the midnight gas lamp very freely on my own hook. The librarian recommended several books with colonial settings, and it didn't take me very long to block out my historical background. Nothing very new and original in all of that—but wait! Every day I haunted the studio, and each day I got sympathetic with a different one of our company.

"Now you know that when vaudeville folks go to a music publisher's for an act they usually sit down and tell

the man who is to write the act every stunt they can do. If a man can dance a jig he puts it in the act. If he can turn a somersault he puts that in too.

"Well, that is the way I shook down that bunch of actors. I got each one to tell me the exact things he had ambitions to do. The men were easy and the women fell like over-ripe plums. After each story I skipped in to my typewriter and wrote it down, and let me tell you that out of that one small company I got enough melodrama to work into several stories—and I used it all, but not in the first film.

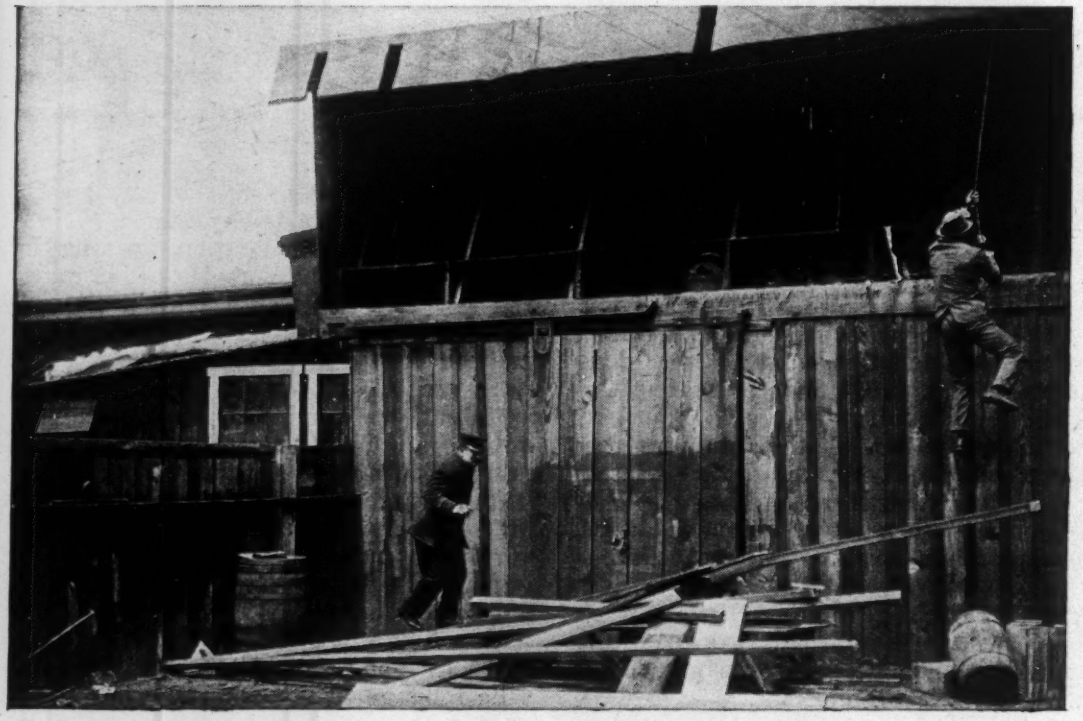
"When I had gathered all of the material I sat down and manufactured a plot to fit into my setting, and after I finished writing it I was real excited. But I had seen too many stories swiped to be careless with mine, so I hunted up the copyright laws, planning to protect myself. By just the rarest luck Ma had got acquainted with a woman who lived in the flat below us. The woman's son was a linotyper, and I went down to ask his advice about getting my story printed.

"I don't know to this day how he worked it, but in less than a week he brought me a neat printed pamphlet—the che-ild of my wits. He and his wife and kids are living in Ma's Long Island house now—but that's neither here nor there.

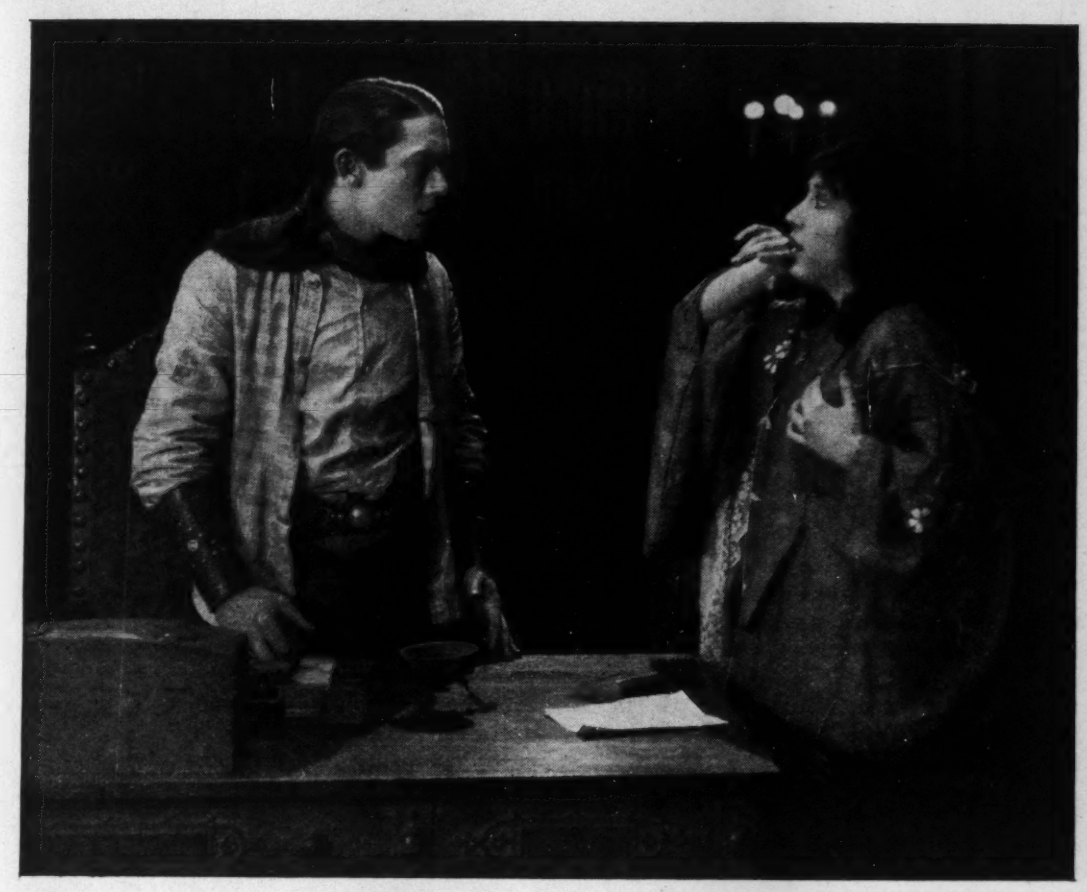
"In the meantime I was laying my plans at the studio. First I slipped the news to Harris that I was trying to put the costume idea into the heads of Davall and Doner. I told him not to let on we had ever spoken of it, because Doner, especially, liked to think every idea used was his own. Harris told me out of the corner of his mouth that it was a good thing the firm had money enough to hire brains for itself.

"To each of the others I pulled practically the same line—pledged them to secrecy and said I was going to slip a few good things for them into the next scenario I had in my clutches.

"Things were getting desperate with Davall and Doner and they had just decided they would have to buy something when I sprung my copyrighted scenario on them—and believe me, I made some iron-clad bargain with those birds, too. They had to pay me a lump sum and ten per cent of the net income on all copies of the film that were out to exhibitors. I sure made them give till it hurt. And I was square with the



*A narrow escape in the business of getting local color.*



*Jack Pickford in an O. Henry Story. A long call from the days when little Jack came riding up to the studio on his bicycle.*

actors, too, for I made it a part of the agreement that I should help Harris select the cast, and I saw to it that they all were given the parts they had cooked up for themselves.

"It was not long before we began work on the picture, and I think it was the happiest company I ever saw assembled before a megaphone before or since—and all of them keeping their mouths shut about how they got their good fat parts to play.

"For the outside stuff we went up in Westchester County where the old orchards have stone walls around them, and we blew in a lot of money on the Battle of Bunker Hill. The way Harris faked the burning of Charlestown was one of the best things he ever did.

"And if I do say it as shouldn't, that picture was a humdinger. Nowadays it would be a seven reel super-feature, but even then it was good enough to attract a lot of attention and set our feet firmly on the upward path. You'd hardly believe that to this day I draw an occasional little royalty check out of it from some out of the way corner of the world.

"I've written many a film story since, but none that ever gave me the thrill that one did. I think I forgot to mention that our company had no idea I was the author, and it remained for our leading lady to win the blue ribbon in our own private cat show.

"She got tired of seeing all the attention I was getting, and out on location she told the character woman so. 'I personally know,' she said insinuatingly, 'that Miss Perkins has got an awful drag with the Firm.'"

Miss Perkins finished her story on her feet, for a messenger had come for her. She had to go take a look at a set before they began shooting, but before we said good-by I meekly asked for one of the stars' interviews I had refused.

"They," I told her, "sound like truth, but yours will have to go out under the head of fiction."

# OH TEACHER, TEACHER!

*By* FRANCES MADDOCK

*Illustrated by Hanson Booth*

ITALY DI PIANO wept inconsolably over her multiplication tables. Abe Slotkovitz exchanged loud and uncomplimentary remarks with Tony Filibelli, across the aisle. Solomon Rabinoff, just "out of Russia," protested wildly in near-English, shaking a dirty fist at his accuser and arch-enemy, Jake Shapiro. Little black Mozelle Johnson led a troop of noisy, excited children around the room in frantic search for something or other. In this state of disorder Teacher found her exemplary second grade class as she entered the room on the stroke of the afternoon bell.

"Teacher, da guinea!" came in a loud chorus before she had time to voice her disapproval.

"Yiss, ma'am, Teacher!" yelled Rocco Domato, assuming the burden of the explanation. "Somebody robs her or somethings! She don' stands no more on da cage or on da room! An' Giovanni he says like dat Italy dood it, an' Tony says Abe dood it, an' Jake says Solomon dood it, an' everybody was makin' roffneck over it!"

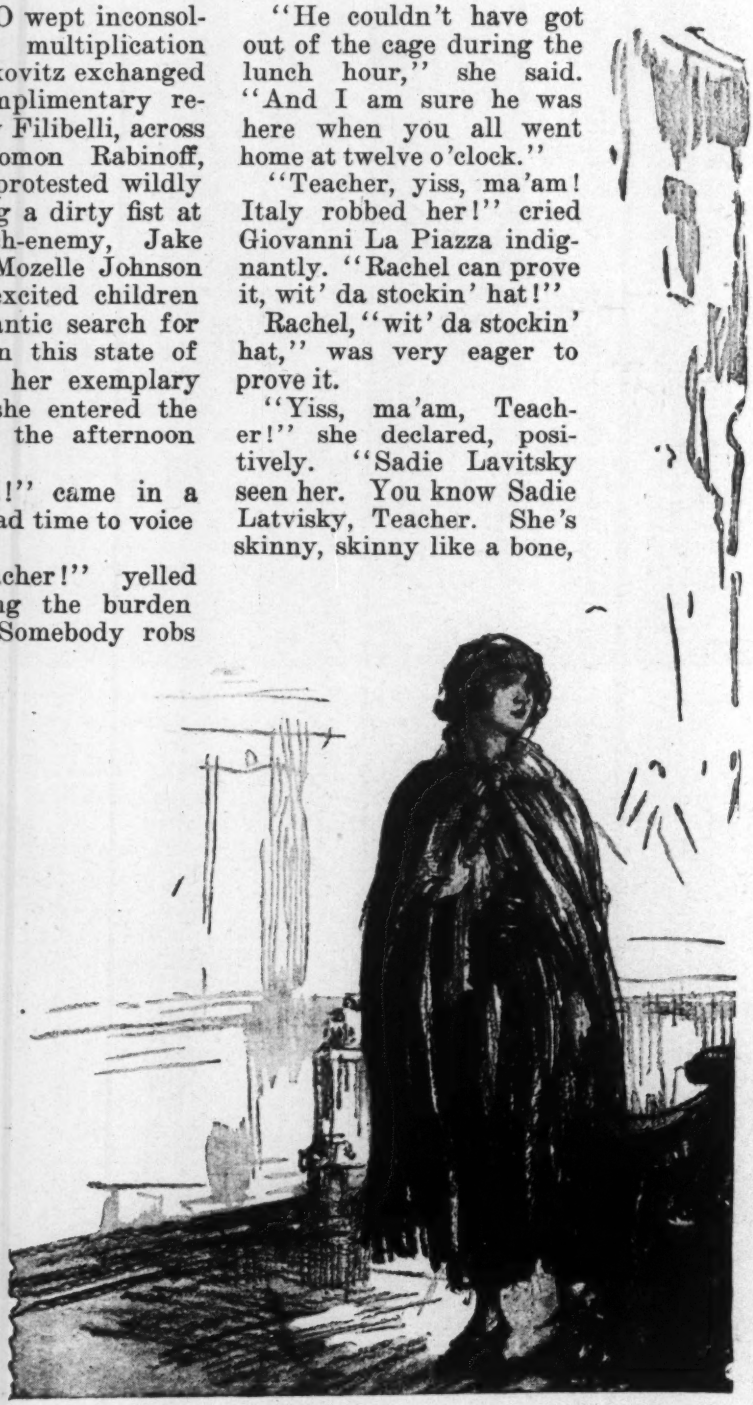
Teacher glanced toward the wire cage in the corner, where, in accordance with her Normal School training, she had ensconced, some months before, a little brown and white guinea pig, as pet and mascot of Room 27, and source ad infinitum of lessons in Art, Nature Study, Humaneness and what not. The cage was empty. She searched all accessible corners. "Guinea" was gone.

"He couldn't have got out of the cage during the lunch hour," she said. "And I am sure he was here when you all went home at twelve o'clock."

"Teacher, yiss, ma'am! Italy robbed her!" cried Giovanni La Piazza indignantly. "Rachel can prove it, wit' da stockin' hat!"

Rachel, "wit' da stockin' hat," was very eager to prove it.

"Yiss, ma'am, Teacher!" she declared, positively. "Sadie Lavitsky seen her. You know Sadie Latvisky, Teacher. She's skinny, skinny like a bone,



*"Good night, everybody!" Teacher called back.*

*"Buona sera, Teach'," echoed half a dozen small voices in soft Italian.*

*Her fingers crept nervously to her drawn, quivering mouth — then she burst into tears*

an' she wears on her upstairs such a blue waist, an' on her downstairs a dirty red skirt. She goes by dat big long teacher —Misses Barerib's room."

"Miss Barrett," corrected Teacher. "Yes, I know Sadie," she added. "What about her?"

"Sadie she says like dis," Rachel went on breathlessly. "She says like dis how she looks by our door to-day dinner-times, an' seen how Italy stands an' stands on da room afters when Teacher an' all da kids goes out."

By this time poor Italy had mustered courage to defend herself.

"Oh, no, ma'am, Teacher!" she wailed. "I stands li'l' bit on'y on da room—how I can look on dat golden fish —how I can look on his face!"

Teacher was aware of Italy's strange passion for the new goldfish.

"I understand, dear," she said. "I know you wouldn't take the guinea pig."

"Teacher, Italy make a big monkey face on me!" cried Rachel hotly. "How I says like dat she robs da guinea!"

"She take her tongue out an' show it to me!" countered Italy brokenly.

"Rachel and Italy!" Teacher gasped, feigning horror. "I'm ashamed of you!"

"Teacher, I betcha dollar Abe got her!" shouted Tony Filibelli with conviction. "Abe is from long bad, Teacher! How he all time makes me a fist, an' haves me a fight, an' steps on my face! How he pinches me wit' pins! An' how he takes such a water gun and hands up all da kids an' robs deir pockets! Betcha dollar he robs da guinea!"

This heated recital of Abe's misdeeds evoked no response from that blasé offender. Abe was the black sheep of Room 27. Blame had come to be his daily portion and one charge more or less was negligible. But he had his redeeming trait: he was truthful.

"Abe, do you know anything about the guinea pig?" Teacher asked.

"No, ma'am," he growled, and no one doubted his word.

"I know, Teacher!" cried Caesar Del Regno, impressively. "I guess it's Gabriel what got her. Not Gabriel Maffia—Gabriel what got all time da broken pants. He ain't here dis aft."

"Gabriel Vinci," Teacher prompted.

"His toots hurts an' his face is too big for him!" volunteered Moses Rothenburg.

"No, ma'am!" contradicted Guido Dongario. "I seen him, one o'clock, havin' his funs, playin' outside wit a red head!"

"Yiss, ma'am, Teacher," Caesar went on eagerly, ignoring the interruptions. "Gabriel Vinci—he lives over by where da trains walks. I guess he gots da guinea. Always an' always he wants he should hold on her an' don' lets no guys else takes her. Even upside down he holds on her to-day morning, how nearly her eyes could fall out. An' all time he take her by his desk an' put her in his cap 'n' everyt'ings!"

Plainly Gabriel's fondness for the pet

had cast suspicion on his fair name. But his good friend Simon Meyerovitch rose nobly to his defense.

"Oh, Teacher, no, ma'am!" Simon cried reproachfully. "How Ceasar says lies on Gabriel! Gabriel he ain't no fresh-neck! He don' never doos nobody not'-ings! An' he knows everyt'ings for Teacher an' he comes wit clean faces an' clean pants for Teacher, 'n' everything! But Teacher," he added, confidentially, "might it could be Leonardo what got her. Leonardo he says like dis how he goes every time by Beppo's, over by Hunt Street, by County Hospital. You know, Teacher, Beppo what sells moneys for guineas. So Leonardo says like dis might Beppo could give him much moneys for a such nice guinea!"

Leonardo was on his feet at once loudly proclaiming his innocence.

"Teacher, no, ma'am!" he protested, vigorously. "I goes wit' lotsa kids by Beppo's store how I should look on all t'ings—guineas an' bunnies an' fishes, even. An' I says like dis to Beppo, we got a such nice guinea by our school, an' Beppo says like dat he sells moneys for guineas. But honest, Teacher, I don' got dat guinea! I don' knows not'in!"

"Well, we won't say any more about it now," said Teacher, who was anxious to proceed with the afternoon's program. "I should feel very sorry indeed if I thought one of our good children would hurt the guinea pig or take him away. But if any one did, I hope he will tell us about it soon."

With half-suppressed excitement Room 27 resumed the work of the day. Each child performed in turn his particular feats in reading, spelling and "numbers." If all his work was satisfactory he was given new lessons for the next day, regardless of the status of the rest of the class. Besides the reward of definite personal progress, there were always so many alluring things awaiting the "good and faithful," whose work was well done. There were the goldfish, the guinea pig—though not to-day, alas—the sand table with piles of sand and clay to be made into all sorts of lovely things; and there was the long, low reading table with its little chairs, at the front of the room, where one met with such enchanting personages as The Sleeping Beauty, Jack the Fiddler and a host of others, in pretty books with easy words and gay colored pictures.

Rachel Gottlieb bent a radiant, dirty little face over the story of Cinderella and fingered lovingly its gold-and-turquoise covers. Rosario Corso forgot his rags and his lame leg in the beauties of the Christmas Book, as he devoured its glowing pages and pressed resounding kisses on the faces of the Christ Child and Mary. Teacher smiled to herself as she watched them. She had a sincere faith in the beneficent power of things beautiful; and she liked to think that each little Jew, Italian, Negro, Russian or Pole, coming from a wretched, ugly home into this clean, restful room with its soft flashes of color in picture and curtain and its lovely books, felt the gracious presence of beauty and somehow grow better for its influence.

Then into Teacher's idealistic musings popped the troubling little thought of the guinea pig. If one of the children had taken him, she must find the culprit and bring him to some sort of justice. Of course she knew that theft was not an unusual offense among the smaller children of the school, and that a child

*"I spends it, I buys lots candies an' ice-cream cones."*

might "take" things without any real consciousness of wrong, in the adult sense. But it was part of her duty to awaken a moral consciousness by pointing out the ugliness of evil and the beauty of being good. She scanned the childish faces before her and wondered how she should begin.

Once a week, usually on Fridays, Room 27 devoted fifteen or twenty minutes to a story period, during which the children were encouraged to relate stories or personal experiences with freedom and fluency. It occurred to Teacher to change her program and give the exercise this afternoon. It was her custom to make this work an aid to concentration as well as expression by suggesting repeatedly, "Tell what you are thinking about." If the thought of having kidnapped the guinea pig was present in any child's mind to-day, perhaps the force of her suggestion might impel him to disclose his secret during the course of the exercise. She would make the experiment, at any rate.

Room 27 welcomed the unexpected story period with delight.

"Sadie Borowsky, what are you thinking about?" Teacher began abruptly.

"I t'inks about a swell story!" Sadie cried eagerly. "My auntie so she gots married wit' a butcher-shop, she tells me like dis how is a swell lady what sleeps an' sleeps—how long! Might she could sleeps tousen years or somethings! An' how was tooth-brushes growink all around by dat lady's house!"

"Thorn-bushes," Teacher interrupted smiling at this strange twist to the old tale.

"An' comes by night a fat long man, an' gives a clap on da door, an' key da lock, an' makes stand up da lady, an' den dey kiss deirselves," Sadie narrated breathlessly. "An' I knows a story 'bout Snow White an' da Seven Little Warts——"

"Teacher! No, ma'am! Not warts! It's 'bout dwarfs!" Mike Yocco broke in, with scorn.

"One story is enough for to-day, Sadie" said Teacher. Tell us what you are thinking about, Angelo Boncetta."

"I t'inks about my ma to-day morning bought a baby!" Angelo announced proudly.

"A new baby!" Teacher exclaimed, with due enthusiasm. "Isn't that lovely! Is it a boy or a girl, Angelo?"

Angelo shrugged thin shoulders.

"I don' knows, Teacher," he said. "It ain't yet got christened."

"I t'inks about da guinea," cried Isaac Rosenberg suddenly, and hopes of a clue rose up in Teacher's breast.

"Did you take him, Isaac?" she asked quickly.

"No, ma'am, I knows a rhyme about him," said Isaac.

In accordance with the Course of Study in English, the month previous had been devoted to the analysis and composition of the couplet. Evidently Isaac had not yet recovered from his "fine frenzy."

"It says like dis," he piped in a sing-song voice,

> "Pretty guinea, don't you cry,
> Much obliged, much obliged."

Teacher wrinkled her brow over this senseless jargon. Then she remembered a little darky chorus she had taught in the fall.

> "Picaninny, don't you cry,
> Hushaby, hushaby."

she repeated slowly. "Why, Isaac," she cried, "I thought you knew those words a long time ago!"

Isaac's poetic outburst spurred other ambitious rhymesters and Teacher was threatened with a veritable deluge of jingles.

> "I seen some big red flowers,
> I wipes my face wit' towers,"

declaimed Dante Di Ambrosia, with a poetic pride worthy of his illustrious ancestor.

"'Towels,' not 'towers', Dante," Teacher said. "No more poems, to-day, children," she added. "Let us have stories, to-day. Maria Tarantelli, you tell us one."

Maria was Teacher's housekeeper and model pupil.

"I don' knows no story," Maria answered blankly. "I don' knows notin'."

"Why, Maria!" Teacher remonstrated.

"I don' knows notin' to t'ink," Maria insisted.

"Teacher. you know what I t'inks about?" cried Pasquale Gottardo eagerly.

*As they walked through the dirty streets, strains of Rigoletto came to them.*

"Tell us, Pasquale," said Teacher.

"I t'inks how my ma tells me like dis about God," he began, reflectively. "How God build da world an' how Saint Mike an' Saint Pete was friends of God an' how was a star lookin' on Maria an' her baby by Battleham, an' how a big angel was at da sky, singin' a fiddle."

"An my ma says like dis," announced Giuseppe Luigi, not to be outdone in Biblical lore. "She says how is a fresh king, so he wants all da babies should gets stabbed. So he takes two soldiers in his barn an' turns on da 'lectric, an' finds 'em each one a nice an' shiny stabber. An' he says like dis, 'Go an' stab da babies an' bring da hearts.'

"So da soldiers says, 'Awright. But we needs to go first on da barber-shop an' take a shave.'

"So afters da soldiers comes by Maria's house an' Maria sawed 'em comin'—she was sitting' by da window wit' her baby on her laps. So she quick turn ups her apron an' hide da baby.

"So one soldier comes in and says like dis, 'Good morning Maria. Ain't you got no babies round here.'

"An' Maria she was how scared, so she say, 'I—I—don' know. Wait—till I looks in my apron.'

"So she look in her apron and dere was no baby—on'y flowers! Dat baby was how smart, he change hisself into flowers!

"So Maria say, 'No. I ain't got no baby—on'y flowers. See!'

"So da soldier says, 'Awright, Maria. Good-by.'

"So Maria sit down an' cry cause she got on'y flowers in her apron. So afters she hear a small noise, an' she look quick in her apron, an' so da flowers was changed to her baby again. An' Maria was how glad!

"So afters da soldiers dey says like dis dey don' want to stab no babies, so dey breaks deir stabbers an' trows 'em under da sewer. An' so——"

But the recess bell broke in on this whimsical modern version of ancient happenings and the story period ended without a hint as to the fate of the lost "guinea."

After recess Room 27 dramatized The Magic Goose. The king and queen, resplendent in gold paper crowns, sat in state at the front of the room. The hero paraded up and down the aisles, carrying a large cardboard goose, and followed by the excited procession of folk who had come under its enchantment. The king's herald blew his red horn and proclaimed the king's promise to reward the fortunate one who could make the princess laugh. And the princess herself, the beautiful Princess Violet, who had never smiled—where, indeed, was she?

"She's sittin' on her seat!" yelled Mike Yocco, and all eyes turned to see the Princess Violet, otherwise Maria Tarantelli, Teacher's housekeeper and best pupil, still sitting in her seat, her head on her desk.

"What is the matter, dear?" Teacher asked.

Maria lifted a flushed, troubled face.

"I hurts—so moch—da head," she stammered. "I don' wants I should today be Princess Violin."

Maria's place was quickly filled by Nunciata Diazza, who, however, proved to be wholly wanting in the gravity of demeanor becoming a sick princess. The hero had little difficulty in making her laugh, and easily won his reward before the dismissal bell rang.

After dismissal Maria was at her post as usual, folding the table covers, putting away the story books and setting to rights that sanctum sanctorum known as Teacher's closet. Teacher watched the lovely oval face, the sad, strangely old eyes, as with reverent hands and a rapt air Maria performed the rites of housekeeper. Teacher was never tired of studying this odd, sphinx-like child, whose quiet manner and pale, inscrutable little face gave, somehow, a vague impression of subtlety.

"You are a good little girl, Maria," Teacher said, impulsively. "How old are you?"

"I make nine year, da day behind yesterday," said Maria.

"You look older than that," commented Teacher. "Have you a rubber band, dear?" she asked, changing the subject, as Maria flushed red under her scrutiny.

Maria drew a knotted rubber band from above her right knee and slipped it around the bundle on Teachers' desk.

"I wonder what could have happened to our guinea pig," Teacher said, half to herself, as she turned to put on her hat before the mirror on the back of the closet door.

Maria did not answer, and when Teacher looked around she found that her housekeeper, having finished her allotted tasks, had slipped out quietly.

The next morning's session opened without any tidings of the guinea pig. Teacher felt some compunction about neglecting the matter longer.

"Children," she began, as soon as she had taken the attendance, "will each of you write me a little letter this morning? If any one took the guinea pig away yesterday, he may tell me so in his letter, and no one will know anything about it but me."

Room 27 set eagerly to work, and after much laborious scratching and grunting the missives were completed and collected. Teacher instructed the children to study their spelling and glanced hurriedly through the pile of half-legible scrawls.

The first one read:

"helo techr. i lik yu o boy i didn tak da ginnee my babee is sick she coff lik a dog i fite a boy up my dog nose me dam poppo"

Another, rather interrogatory in tone, ran:

"deer teech mi face is klen? ware is

da ginne? i don no? i got a pane? i got a watch dog? an i got a watch cat? she watch for mouses? i seen fonny show? i gotta bust laffin? mi sister he is bowlegget?

mike vinci"

Teacher ran through a number of similar epistles before she came upon the following:

"dier techer i take da ginee by beppo he give me muney

toney Caruso"

Teacher glanced quickly toward Tony's seat. His round, innocent face bent earnestly over his spelling paper. He looked like a Murillo angel writing a heavenly scroll. He raised his wide eyes for a minute and met Teacher's gaze with a wistful half-smile.

Tony! Of all children! Teacher thought. For as Maria Tarantelli was the model girl of her class, her little cousin Tony was Teacher's best boy—truthful, unselfish, unobtrusively dutiful. She must see him at recess and investigate.

"I should like two or three boys to stay in and help me this morning," she said, just before the recess bell rang.

"Carmen Cicero, Nathan Rothenburg and Tony Caruso," she enumerated, choosing from among the score who signified their eagerness to serve.

When the rest of the children had passed out to recess, she dispatched Nathan and Carmen to the engine room to clean erasers. Tony remained alone at her side.

"Tony," she said, looking at him squarely, "I can't believe that you took the guinea pig!"

"Yiss, ma'am, Teacher," he assured her, almost eagerly. "I stands li'l' bit on da room yesterday dinnertimes after da adder kids goes out, an' gives da guinea under my jacket. I buys moneys wit her off Beppo by County Hospital—seventy-fi' cent."

"What did you do with the money?" Teacher demanded.

Tony hesitated.

"I spends it," he answered reluctantly. "I buys lots candies an' ice-cream cones."

Teacher shook her head reproachfully.

"I always thought you were my best boy, Tony," she said. "Surely you know it is very selfish and wrong to take anything that doesn't belong to you. You wouldn't want any one to take what belonged to you. And God won't love you—nobody will ever love you—if you do such things!"

"Yiss, ma'am," Tony acquiesced readily. "Dat God on da church He talk every time like dat—how nobody shouldn't rob nobody not'ings. Always an' always God says like dat."

"Well what do you think you ought to do about it?" Teacher asked presently.

"I don'—know—Teacher," Tony faltered.

Teacher glanced at the greasy, tattered man's coat that hung below Tony's knees; at the dilapidated shoes and the ragged waist through which his naked little body was visible.

"Do you ever get any money?" she ventured. "Do you ever go to the store for any one or carry up coal and get pennies for it?"

"No, ma'am, Teacher," Tony answered. "On'y I helps my pa an' ma wit' da works. I brangs woods an' I washes da house an' wipes da pump. But I don' gets never no moneys."

"Well you can work for me," Teacher said, as sternly as she could. "You can go to the store for me, and clean erasers, and carry up supplies. I'll pay you and you can save the money and buy back the guinea pig."

"Yiss, ma'am, Teacher," Tony responded earnestly. "I could work an' work every time for Teacher, an' pay back da guinea."

"But I shall always feel very, very sorry to think my good Tony would do such a thing!" Teacher ended in a grieved voice. "Go to your seat, Tony!"

Neither Tony nor his cousin Maria were at school that afternoon.

"Maria, her ma is bad sick," reported Jake Shapiro. "She stands on County Hospital from long—a week a'ready."

Tony was at school next morning, but Maria was still absent.

"I stood yesterday home how I should hold my baby," Tony explained. "My ma she goes on hospital, how she could look on my auntie. My auntie she is bad sick! Might she could die even!"

"Maria's mother!" Teacher exclaimed. "Is she so very ill? Maria hasn't said anything about it."

"Yis, ma'am," said Tony. "She is how bad sick! She stands on da bed from long!"

That night Maria's mother died. Three days later Maria returned, very pale and silent, her sombre eyes a little sadder than usual. Teacher went to her seat to speak to her, but at the sound of the kindly voice, Maria burst into loud and violent weeping.

"She have to cry now, li'l' bit," murmured gentle little Rosa Morelli, without raising her eyes from her number paper; and poor Maria, her head bowed on her desk, eased her grief in a long flow of tears, while Room 27 looked on in respectful and sympathetic silence.

Teacher learned from Tony that his mother would care for her sister's orphans until their father could arrange to "stay them up" in an orphanage.

Room 27, engrossed with poor Maria's bereavement, seemed to have forgotten about the guinea pig. But Tony was secretly carrying out his pact with Teacher. He had asked Beppo, the "guinea man," not to sell the little animal, and by dint of many trips to the neighborhood stores and to the engine and supply rooms, he had amassed, within a week, the munificent sum of twenty-five cents.

Tony came up before the bell one morning, that he might have Teacher's private ear.

"My ma says like dis!" he announced breathlessly. "Might could Teacher come on my house? My ma she wants she should make mocaroni for Teacher!"

"But I'm afraid your mother hasn't much time for visitors now, Tony," Teacher objected. "She has so many children to take care of."

"Oh, Teacher, she got lots time!" Tony assured her eagerly. "She wants bad Teacher should come to-day afternoon. She wants she should say somethings on Teacher."

"Well, I'll come for a little while, dear," Teacher promised.

All day Tony wore a beatific smile in anticipation of Teacher's visit. After dismissal he and Maria stepped out proudly with their guest, followed by many envious, wistful glances. As they walked through the dirty streets, strains of Rigoletto came to them faintly from a street piano somewhere in the neighborhood; and Maria and Tony regaled Teacher with colorful glimpses of their own fair Italy.

"At Italy is how nice!" exclaimed Tony reflectively. "Lots flower, an' boats walkin' an' sittin' down in da water. An' lots grape hangin' up for every peoples to eat."

"An we was maka all time wine, on Italy," Maria narrated shyly. "We was so clapping wit' da foot on da grape, an' da wine she was come."

"With your feet?" asked Teacher. "With your shoes on?"

"At Italy," Tony answered, with an air of superior wisdom, "you go all times barefeets. Dere it is style you was go barefeets!"

Tony's mother, festively garbed in a hectic purple cotton dress, greeted her guest effusively.

"Sant' Maria!" she cried, kissing Teacher's hand. "Teach'—he come mine leetla house! Sant' Maria!"

Teacher was at once surrounded by a troop of little Tarantellis and Carusos.

"What beautiful children!" she exclaimed, looking from one lovely little dark face to another.

"Mine bambeen!" ejaculated the mother, proudly, drawing two of her own babies close to her. Then glancing at her dead sister's children, she cried in a choked whisper, "Concetta's bambeen!" and covered her face with her apron to hide her grief. But in another minute with the mercurial temperament of her race, she was smiling and chattering gaily in Italian as she led Teacher to her place at the table and served up the savory "mocaroni."

The table talk progressed but lamely. Tony's mother could understand most of Teacher's remarks, but she had great difficulty in responding to them. Maria acted as interpreter.

"Tony is such a good little boy, Mrs. Caruso," Teacher said. "And he is growing so fast! He will soon be big enough to help you a great deal."

This innocent remark evoked an unexpected protest in explosive Italian.

"My auntie says lika dees," Maria translated. "She say, 'No! No! Teacher! Better bambino she don' grows beeg! Eet ees pulla by da moder's dress when bambino she ees small one, bot pulla by da moder's heart when bambino ees beeg one!'"

"But it will be nice when he can help

you a little more," Teacher said. "You have so much work to do!"

"Yah!" responded Mrs. Caruso, with a broad smile and another volley of staccato Italian words.

"She says lika dees," Maria explained. "She says so datta God, He gotta on'y t'ree person. Bot my auntie, she gotta be moder, an' washa clothes, an' cooka mocaroni, an' maka dress for bambeen—evertheengs! She gotta be feefty deeference peoples!"

Teacher could not help smiling at this bit of theology de luxe, and Mrs. Caruso laughed long and loud at her little joke.

It was almost time for Teacher to leave before Tony's mother mentioned her reason for asking Teacher to call.

"*Madre di Dio!*" she cried suddenly. "Teach'! dees flower—mine Concetta! Ees so nice, Teach'! Bleeve me!"

Teacher looked blank.

"Flowers!" she echoed. "I don't understand."

"Yah! dees flower!" repeated Mrs. Caruso. "So nice rosa—Teach' geeva —mine Concetta—by 'ospital!"

Teacher continued to look mystified and Tony's mother, thinking the fault lay in her speech, threw up her hands in despair and turned to Maria to elucidate matters.

Maria was at Teacher's side in a minute, her pale face flushed, her eyes filled with tears.

"Teacher—to-morrow—on da school I tells you!" she whispered excitedly, while her aunt looked on, wondering. "How my auntie says like dat—Teacher, I couldn't to say dat now!"

Maria's eyes were so full of trouble and Mrs. Caruso apparently so concerned over the delivery of her message, that Teacher smiled in feigned understanding, and with a word of thanks to her hostess took her leave.

"*Buona sera!* Teach'!" Mrs. Caruso called after her, from the doorway.

"*Buona sera!*" echoed half a dozen small voices in soft Italian.

"Good night, everybody!" Teacher called back, smiling and waving her hand.

All the next day Maria carefully avoided Teacher's eyes. At the recess periods, contrary to her custom of staying in to help, she slipped out with the rest. Teacher wondered.

"I should like to see you for a few minutes after school, Maria," she said, just before dismissal; for she was not sure that in her present mood, Maria would even remain to attend to her usual household duties.

When the rest of the children had gone home, Teacher called Maria to her desk.

"What is the matter, dear?" she asked. "What is it you were going to tell me to-day? And what was your auntie trying to say yesterday—about flowers?"

Maria's eyes grew strained and bright and her fingers crept nervously to her drawn, quivering mouth. Then she burst into tears.

"Oh—Teacher!" she cried, forcing out the words between sobs. "Mine moder—mine moder—how she lika da flower! All—time—she say—lika dees —how ees on Italy—flower an' flower —lots flower!"

"Yes, dear," Teacher said gently. "I am sure there are lovely flowers in Italy."

"Mine moder," Maria went on brokenly, "she all time—want—she could—maka da red flower on mine yard. So da boss lan'lord—he say, 'No! no!' He don' wants—no flower! Ees ashes an cans on'y—on mine yard!"

"That's too bad, dear!" murmured Teacher.

"I goes on hospital," Maria continued with difficulty. "I should look—on mine moder—how she was so bad seeck! An' I looks on oder ladies on hospital. An' Teacher! how dey got socha red flower—sittin' down in da window!"

She stopped again, her eyes full of sorrow and strange fear; then with a great effort she burst out:

"Oh—Teacher! da guinea! Teacher 'scuse please! I buys moneys wit him! I buys da red flower for mine moder! Oh, Teacher, she was so moch bad seeck! She die—she die——!"

She finished her pitiful little story in a fit of wild, convulsive weeping. Teacher looked from the forlorn, shaken little figure beside her to the troubled face of Tony, who still sat quietly in his seat. He rose and came slowly forward.

"Tony," Teacher said, after a while, "Why did you tell me you took the guinea pig?"

"Teacher—'scuse please! I did—robs da guinea," Tony stammered. "Maria—she was how scared to rob him! How Teacher might won' likes her no more, an don' wants never she should be no more housekeepers!"

"Did Maria tell her mother about it?" Teacher asked.

"No, ma'am, Teacher. Maria couldn't to tell her ma like dat! So she says like dis to her ma, how Teacher buys da red flower for her on hospital."

Teacher took counsel with herself. Maria, the demure, the exemplary! And yet, she reflected, it was not so surprising, after all. From a child of Maria's type, silent, introspective, at times strangely shrewd, one could never quite know what to expect. But what should she do? She could not bring herself to preach a banal sermon on theft to this bowed and weeping little orphan, already overwhelmed with childish remorse and fresh from the pangs of real sorrow. Still, she must make some attempt to deal out justice.

"Maria," she began, presently, "you have been my housekeeper now for a long time, haven't you?"

Maria broke into a wail. To her conscience-stricken little soul Teacher's words could have but one implication: she was about to put an end to the dearest of Maria's poor pleasures, the joy of being "housekeepers."

"And you have been such a good housekeeper, Maria," Teacher went on, "that I have often thought I would give you a little present."

Maria stared stupidly through her tears.

"And, Maria, I have thought of a lovely present for you!" Teacher continued, mysteriously. "Not a doll or a story book or a box of candy—Maria, I am going to give you—the guinea pig!"

She stopped to watch the effect of this startling announcement. Maria looked at her dazedly.

"Tony can run over to Beppo's and get him in the morning, and you can come up early and put him back in the cage before the other children get here. And won't they be surprised!"

Slowly Teacher's words were seeping into Maria's consciousness. Teacher was talking, not of punishments, but of presents! She was going to give Maria a present! And it was to be nothing less than the precious guinea himself! With her own hands she could restore him to the deserted cage, and all her wrong would be made right again! Maria was overcome! She fell to kissing Teacher's hand impulsively!

And yet, she thought, with a pang of misgiving, perhaps Teacher had not "'scused" her, after all. She had said nothing about it. Maria must make sure.

"Datta God—on da church—He talk lika dees," she faltered, a look of strange wisdom coming into her young eyes. "He say lika dees, eef you maka som swears, He'll 'scuse your swears an' washa dem all off your 'eart. But datta guinea," she added doubtfully, "I don' knows eef somebody might could 'scuse a soch beeg nice guinea."

"We'll 'scuse him," Teacher assured her, smiling, and slipping an arm about each of the children.

"Jus' lika how datta God He talk!" Maria murmured, looking up happily from the curve of Teacher's arm.

## MY LIFE

The trail winds around
To the crags by the sea;
But the path is only wide enough
For you to walk with me.

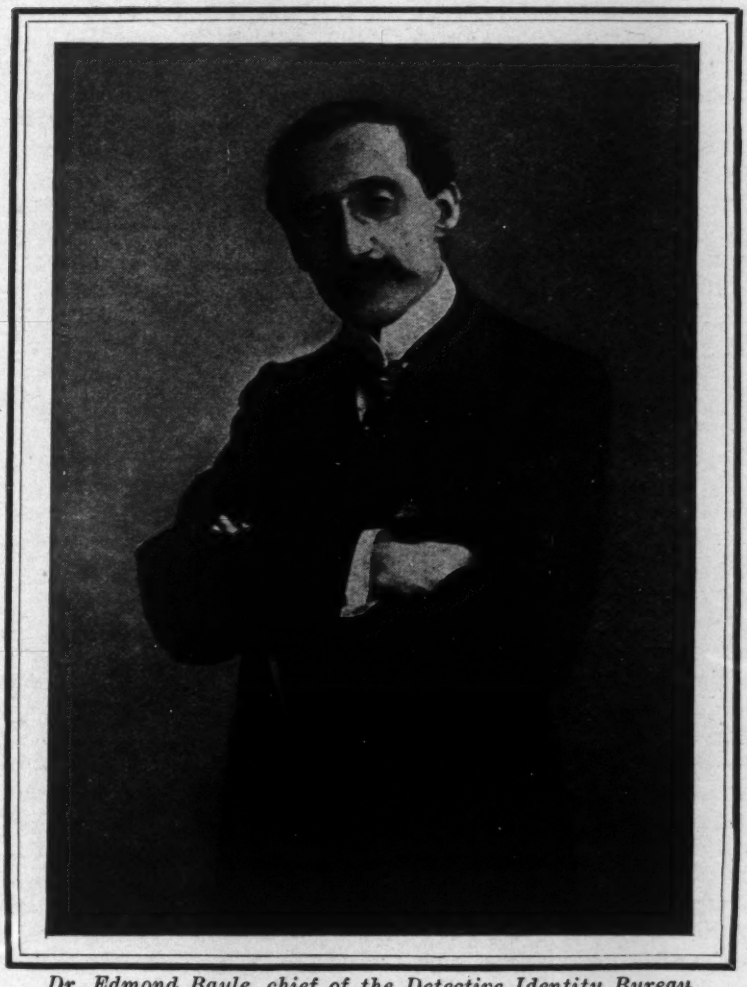
There's a way to my heaven
And a door leading through;
But that door is never off the latch,
Beloved, save to you!

*Reba Johnson.*

# THE CRIME DOCTOR

*By* DR. EDMOND BAYLE

*As set down by Walter S. Hiatt*



*Dr. Edmond Bayle, chief of the Detective Identity Bureau of the Paris Police, is the man most feared by the criminals of France.*

HOW do I work?

Let me tell first why I work.

There is no human act that does not leave its record. There is no crime that cannot be traced to its perpetrator, in the light of modern science. We daily identify criminals by the air they breathed at the place of their crime, by sound registers, by finger prints, by blood analysis. We throw light into the world of the invisible, and bring light from a world to which our eyes have been blinded.

If a criminal spits on the floor, he might in certain cases as well leave his business card behind him. If he washes up blood stains, he is losing time. We can trace blood diluted 2,000 times.

The purpose of all detective work is to brush aside the tissue of lies, of untruths, surrounding every crime. Modern chemistry is making this possible. It points the finger of fact record at the guilty, it absolves the innocent.

The chemical laboratory methods have done away with the Sherlock Holmes and Arsene Lupin school of crime psychology detection. We no longer need to look for the woman, according to our traditional method.

Crime has no mystery to me. I get my thrills in the movies.

The crude third degree is passing. For thousands of years, torture has been used to secure confessions. False confessions have been made to secure freedom.

Here's a very simple example of how we work. Lately the owner of a house burned by the Germans in Northern France asked the French government to indemnify him for his loss. He put in a claim at the same time for 16,000 francs' worth of French bank notes which he affirmed he had placed in a bottle for safe keeping and buried in the cellar. He fled before the enemy, and when he went back he found his bottle, but the bank notes had been charred, he asserted, by the heat, and he offered a few bits of ashes as the residue. He produced witnesses to swear that he had placed the bills in this identical bottle before he was forced to leave.

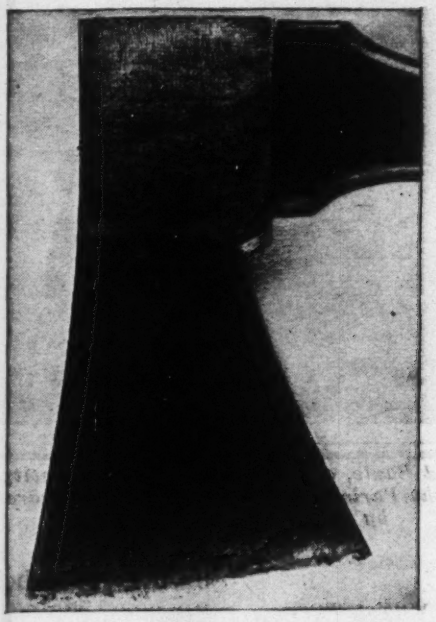
The court of claims referred the bottle to me for examination. It was the work of a moment to show that the ash did not give off the cobalt flame, cobalt blue being the basic color used in making French bank notes. Further analysis of the ash failed to reveal cobalt.

A few months ago the stately old city of Versailles awakened one morning bewildered by the information that some Gobelin tapestries had been stolen from the Salon of Mercury. All our investigating squad had to go by were some finger prints on the broken glass of the palace window, and a piece of shoe string.

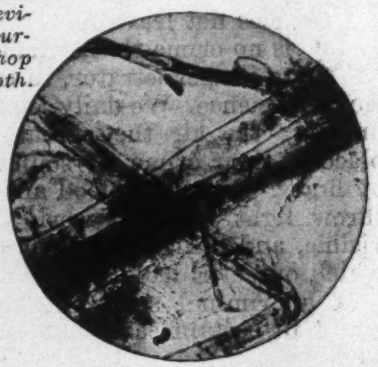
We compared the finger prints with those of all the employees of the palace museum, but without result; with all criminal records, a likewise futile task. Then we began with the shoe string. We got a list of the men who for any reason had been employed about the palace during the past year, and carefully watched them. One named Prosper Charles was observed to have recently repaired a shoe string. Arrested, it was discovered that the piece of shoe string left under the window has come from his shoe. His finger prints confirmed this. His home was visited and there were found the two ancient and valuable tapestries.

During the early part of the war, after the death of Dr. Bertillon, famed for his identity work through the use of finger prints, I was largely engaged in the work of tracing or identifying German and other enemy spies. There was an army of these spies invading our territory. Their means of communication of information was often through the post office by letters addressed to neutral countries.

In any case, spies are obliged to communicate their information by means of writing. A spy will write a letter of love or business, of the most unsuspicious nature. On the lines between he has used

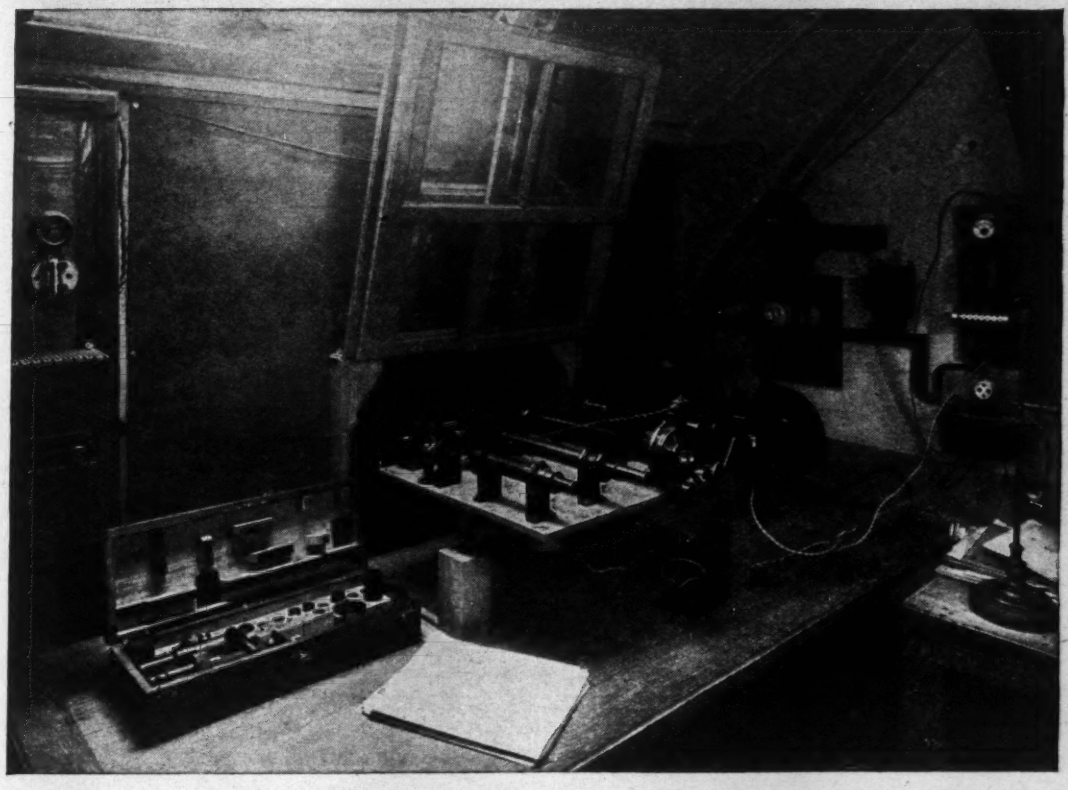


*An analysis of the blood stains on this hatchet, which was put in evidence against a man accused of murder, showed he had used it to chop fish, then wiped it with a cotton cloth.*



*On the left, fibres found on the hatchet and by chemical analysis proved to be merely cotton.*

*On the right, wood fibre found on the hatchet. Proving the nature of these materials established his innocence.*



*Generator for the Spectrophotometer with which light analyses are made of blood, saliva and other substances, leading to the identification and capture of criminals.*

invisible ink to say what he really has in mind. The secret of the composition of invisible inks is closely guarded in every country.

In the beginning, German spies used simple liquids like onion juice or saliva from their mouths, which leave spots on the paper. These can be read after treatment in iodine or other chemical baths. Later they used chemical inks which resisted ordinary revelation baths. My problem was to find the basis of these inks, so that we could give the necessary treatment and be able to read the letters.

One of the persons suspected by the secret police was the woman, who has since become celebrated, variously known as Mata-Hari, Ira Myrtell, and so forth, for whom several men gave up their lives, as testimony of their love.

When the war began she was in Paris, as a dancer, mistress of a German officer located at his Embassy. With the declaration of war he left, and she stayed on, to become the adored mistress of a French nobleman. She fell under suspicion.

Secret agents examined her rooms, time and again, watched her comings and goings, her mail. Finally letters in her handwriting were discovered to be interlined with invisible ink. She was closely watched. It was found she specially prized certain small, dainty handkerchiefs. When the corner of one was dipped in water it was found to be the repository of one of the most secret of the German inks.

As for Mata-Hari, beautiful, intelligent, using her graces of mind and body to ensnare, to lead men to divulge valuable information that might mean the loss of thousands of lives on our battle-fronts, she was taken out before a firing squad at Vincennes prison one October morning, and executed. A dreaded spy to France, in German eyes she died a high patriot. Her noble French lover is now, I believe, in a Spanish monastery, trying to forget his lost love.

Our crime squad works with the regularity and accuracy of a town clock. When an unusual crime is committed, in Paris or anywhere in France, we are notified within a short time. The policemen guard the place of the crime, if it

*Dr. Bayle "listening in" to find out the nature of a substance in solution by its resistance to an electric current passing through it.*

be a house, until the squad arrives. It is composed of photographers, artists and chemists. Drawings are made of the house and room, flashlights taken showing to the naked eye all evidence necessary to reconstruct the scene in a court room, and the chemists take wax impressions of foot-prints, finger-prints, as well as sections of the air of the room. Blood stains and human saliva are absorbed in pieces of cotton and all such traces are taken to the laboratory.

There a methodical examination of the bits of evidence are made, to be held for the trial. If the police have made no arrests, we compare the finger prints with sets of some eight millions of others we have in our files, of persons previously arrested for crime, and sometimes we locate the criminal at once. This part of the work is relatively simple and quick. Blood stains or saliva are excellent for identity purposes, once the police have made arrests and are morally certain of the identity of the criminal. While finger prints are the best means of absolute comparative identity, since no two people in the world have like finger prints, we now make final identity comparisons by blood and saliva.

To date we have depended on chemical analysis for determining if blood stains were animal or human. We now go further and can identify hair, blood and saliva not only as human but, under certain conditions, we can name the human to whom they belong. We use four methods. First, micro-photographic enlargements and comparisons of the matter in hand—hair, saliva, threads of clothing—with those of the suspected person. Second, the chemical tests, as in poison cases. Third, electric conductivity tests, since substances in solid or in solution form have different resistances. It is just like weighing a pound of butter.

By far the most important is the fourth comparative test. This test is based on the fact that every substance, and its respective compounds, emits characteristic light radiations. There is a standard one for oil, another for milk, paper, blood, saliva, wool and so forth.

Spectrography will reveal guilt, and, likewise, save the innocent. Vigo, alias Almeyreda, charged with treason, died suddenly and mysteriously in prison three years ago. There was talk that he had been murdered. Two curious stains were found on his shoe laces. These were suspected to be human blood. The

spectrum of the stains showed one to be mud of alum base, the other paint from the bed. The contention that the man had hanged himself was justified.

The future of criminal detection lies in the use of our knowledge of light and sound. The invisible rays given off by human beings, their heat rays, will now reveal their presence in given spots. Just as the tiny dictograph will record for us conversation taking place in a distant room, so heat rays may register on a mirror and this mirror may ring an electric bell revealing the presence of certain persons at a given spot.

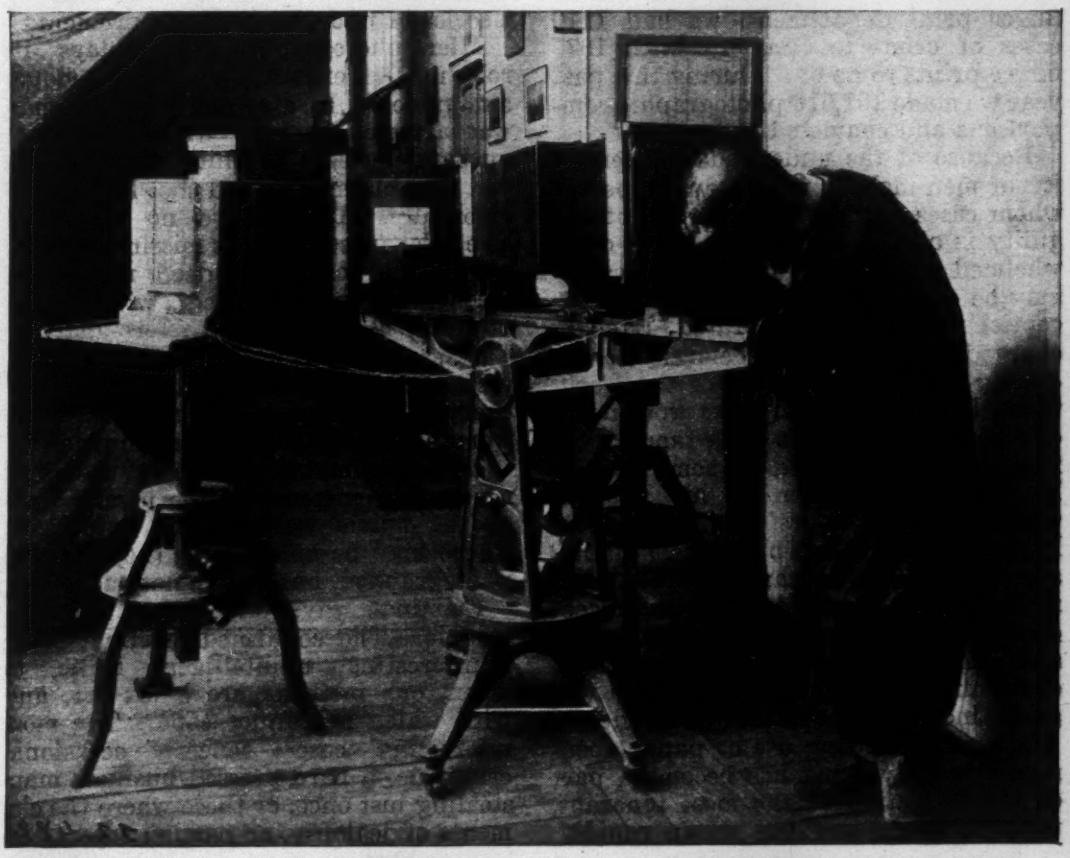
My work is done with the spectrophotometer and other instruments designed to catch the hot vibrations. By changes in heat, we may recognize and analyze the most infinitesimal substance. We work in a dark room, volatilize the substance in hand, and the spectrophotometer identifies the substance by its characteristic light waves.

Suppose we have a piece of letter paper on which we believe invisible ink has been used. We may locate the ink by using a projection lantern of green or violet lights. The hidden text intercepts the invisible ultra-violet rays and the paper may be photographed, revealing everything that has been written.

Take a case where a person was assassinated and the body done away with. Our crime squad brought in a few blood traces. A suspect was arrested and stains were observed on his clothes. We made various tests, finally the light test, and we concluded the blood traces and the stained clothing had the same origin.

Say saliva is found by the crime squad. By the various tests we may determine its degree of alkalinity, the presence of nicotine, of disease microbes, so we know if the man who spit was a smoker or had cold in the head.

In another case, a man is charged with murdering another with an axe. The newspaper with which he wiped blood from the axe is put in evidence. Micro-analysis showed that the axe had never been wiped with a newspaper, but with



*Photographing the invisible — ultra-violet rays of light revealed by spectro-photography.*

cotton cloth, and, further, that the axe had not had any blood on it, but had been used to chop salt meat.

In olden times, at Rome, criminals were branded with hot irons on the forehead, on the hands and legs. Later, in France and England, they had their noses slit, their ears marked, and later in France the brand of the fleur de lys was placed on the left shoulder. Vidocq, the great criminal of Napoleon's time who afterwards became the chief of our detectives, was so branded. So was Milady, in Dumas' "Three Musketeers."

All this was for purposes of identity. It also had the social effect of making one so branded an outcast.

It was as late as 1885 that Bertillon began the identity system of measurements of the head, the feet, and finally the finger prints. All but the latter have been discarded, and they now can be sent broadcast by wireless.

In the new science of crime detection we make use of all the branches of biological and physical chemistry. The complexity of the work is indicated by the fact that in a single year, in the finger print department, we had 1110 cases of crime to clear up, with 1677 finger prints to go on. During this past year we made 101,616 photographic comparisons and convicted 126 persons.

Because of the undependable mentality of men making up the juries before whom cases are tried, confession of the guilty is always desirable. When overwhelmed with proof, a court confession may be obtained. One of the recent exceptions was the celebrated Landru, charged with murdering eleven women during the troubled times of the world war. He made love to these women, all of whom were without close family connections but possessed of some money. He would take them to his villa at Gambais, a two hours' train ride from Paris, kill them, and burn their clothes and bodies. We examined the ashes from his fires, however, and found traces of cells of human bones, after microscopic and other tests. An unusual type of criminal, he never confessed, and was guillotined on circumstantial evidence.

With the growing use of paper documents, since writing has become a part of the education of the most ignorant, the field of forgery has grown rapidly. It has been left, until late years, for handwriting experts, using their eyes, to determine whether and by what hand a will has been changed or a check raised.

Lately we had the case of French treasury bonds changed in date and amount by a clever crook, using chemicals. However, with comparative electric currents we were able, first, to establish that the bonds had been altered, although this fact was not revealed by microscopic photography. When this was done, by tracing the blotting paper used by the criminal in his work, and proving that the same chemical in the blotting paper was that newly applied to the bonds, we found the guilty man, who had tried to defraud the government.

In alterations of wills, if different inks are used for the alterations, as would be likely, the difference of the inks is determined by simple chemical reactions and the fact of alteration disclosed.

Then, just as no finger prints are ever the same, so it is with handwriting. A mathematical law of constancy exists for each person's handwriting. That the latter has been imitated can be shown with mathematical exactness, by a series of photographic measurements.

Micro-photography daily plays its role in the examination of cartridges and pistols. In a recent case a woman was arrested charged with killing her husband by shooting him with a revolver. She claimed he had shot himself accidentally. There were no witnesses. The discharged ball was missing, but the pistol was beside the dead man. His garments were burned with black powder, as shown by micro-analysis. The same analysis showed that the pistol of the dead man had been discharged with smokeless powder. The woman was convicted of the murder.

My experiments have so far failed to reveal the existence of the mystic fluid of the spirit world called ectoplasm. There may be spirits and they may be photographed, but I have not succeeded.

Criminals give civilization a lot of trouble. The confirmed criminal is an uninteresting, unintelligent brute, to whom our methods are black art, and with which he cannot cope. The most interesting cases concern occasional criminals, a hard-pressed business man, stealing just once, or those where the elements of jealousy, or passion enter. So long as we are human we will have crime.

*"It looked as if the bridge had gone and the last car had heeled over on its side."*

# FATE LOOKS IN

*The Last Adventure in the Knotted Cord Series*

*By* EDMUND SNELL

*Illustrated by Dudley G. Summers*

BARING-WELLS had always reserved a soft spot in his heart for Genoa. He was standing on the broad pavement of the Via Venti Settembre, his lean form bent like a bow and his eyes glued to a cigarette case in a jeweller's window. He was trying to decide whether it was of tortoise-shell or merely celluloid when a heavy blow descended on the small of his back. Preventing himself by a miracle from crashing through the plate-glass window, he turned to frown indignantly into the smiling face of a little, elderly Italian with a white beard.

"A thousand pardons, signore! I am afraid I was not looking where I was going.' Summing up Wells, nationality at a second glance, he broke into excellent English. "To tell you the truth, I am hopelessly at sea without my glasses — and I was careless enough to leave them behind when I came out. I trust you are not hurt?"

Baring-Wells was scarcely awake. He had dined at the Olympia the night before, had retired late and slept badly. Otherwise he would have remembered that the nature of his work rendered him momentarily open to attack and been relieved that the blow had been merely the result of an accident.

"There are no bones broken," he returned pleasantly. "I was more anxious for the shopman's glass than for myself."

The little man kept bowing and smiling and murmuring fresh apologies until the Englishman — to whom the affair was finished and done with — was seriously tempted to wander into the shop to save himself from further embarrassment. Although he was perfectly aware

of the super-politenesses customary to southern races, there were times when they got on his nerves.

His gaze travelled back to the window and its array of tortoise-shell, silver, filigree and coral. Directly in front of him hung a Venetian mirror and in its convex surface he caught sight of something that brought him to his senses and made him wonder why he had not noticed it before. From the top pocket of the Italian's jacket hung a blue silk cord, knotted in three places. He swung round on his heel and, hardly conscious that he had spoken, caught the echo of his own voice coming back to him from the porticos:

"The Knotted Cord!"

The next thing he knew was that the man who had bumped into him had darted with surprising agility into the roadway and was in the act of boarding a tram-car.

Baring-Wells followed suit.

The car was almost full and he found a place between a stout woman with a market-basket and a gloomy man with a jaundiced skin and moustaches that looked as if they had been stuck on. His quarry sat at the far end, staring beyond the driver, never once looking in Wells' direction.

"Campo Santo, signore?"

"Is that as far as you go?"

"*Si*, signore."

Not having the remotest idea how far the other proposed taking him, he bought a ticket for the full journey.

People hopped on at frequent intervals, squeezing unconcernedly on to the platforms at either end, until it seemed impossible for either official to function. They climbed a steep gradient, emerging presently from the crowded thoroughfares of Genoa proper into the sparsely populated streets of a straggling suburb. It was hot in the car, and the atmosphere was tinged with garlic and the odor of perspiring bodies. A June sun beat down upon a dusty, undulating landscape, upon gaily-striped awnings, stalls of itinerant vendors of cooling drinks and worn stretches of meaningless waste-ground.

The jolting of the vehicle over worn points roused Baring-Wells from the day-dream into which he had fallen. He glanced up, to see that the human cargo had thinned out considerably and that the benevolent gentleman with the white beard was about to descend.

There was an inn—a solitary building with a narrow roadway on either side over which trailed lines of washing as varied in coloring as flags on a feast-day—and to a table in a long, cool room the Englishman eventually tracked the possessor of the Knotted Cord. In spite of his assertion to the contrary, the little Italian had his spectacles and was adjusting the wires over his ears when Wells halted before him. At the first sight of the orange-tinted lens, recognition came with something in the nature of a shock.

"Signor Alberti!"

The other smiled blandly.

"I was wondering how long it would be before you recognized me. We had the pleasure of meeting once before, if you remember, when you came to see me in the Via Battista in Milan."

Wells dropped into a chair and mopped his forehead with a colored handkerchief.

"I'm afraid I owe you an apology," he stammered. "D'you know, I never realized before what a vast difference glasses make to a man."

Alberti smiled again.

"The simplest and most effective form of disguise! I am told there are at least a thousand people who resemble me, more or less, in Genoa. Distressing as it may seem, as my natural self I am a nonentity, one at whom nobody would pause to look twice; whereas"—he waved a hand eloquently—"my yellow windows transform me into a celebrity! Our mutual friend Ferring arrived with you yesterday?"

Baring-Wells nodded.

"Since the affair at Padova we have been lying low. We grow daily less and less popular with Spalanza's party, and, whatever risks we may be content to take when on duty, we prefer our holidays to be as peaceful and uneventful as possible."

The Italian rubbed his hands together.

"You will lunch with me, of course? The food is good as this sort of place goes, but you mustn't expect an extensive menu. The red wine I recommend; the white is apt to be tart. That was a perfectly amazing coup of yours at Padova and I have instructions from the highest quarters—the very highest,

you understand—to convey its warmest congratulations."

The Englishman was crumbling a morsel of bread between his fingers.

"We had all the luck on our side," he protested modestly.

Alberti shrugged his shoulders.

"There is a certain element of luck in everything. Without it, nothing would be possible. You set out to destroy an ammunition dump that was destined to be employed to overthrow the present government. Only two things were possible—that you failed or succeeded."

"There was one other," interrupted Wells. "We might have blown the whole thing up—which would have entailed enormous loss of life."

"Instead of which you flooded it. The irony of the thing is that the adventure was possibly the last you will ever have to undergo."

He paused to shout an order to a girl in a spotted blouse and white apron who had appeared in a doorway.

"Spalanza is beaten," he announced presently. "I admit it without shame that it is you who have beaten our enemy—Ferring in the first instance, and yourself and he in the later stages. The loss of his war store was a blow from which he will not easily recover. From a personality that threatened to do everything he has dwindled to an angry vulture, clipped of his wings in the North and discredited in the South. As soon as we received Ferring's last report we began a campaign against Spalanza."

Wells leaned back in his chair.

"I can't for the life of me see why you waited so long."

"Because, *amico mio*, we had nothing against the man to justify us. He was powerful; that is no crime. He was unscrupulous; most ambitious politicians are. He advocated seizing the reins of government by force, and it was against that that our greatest difficulty lay. It was only too obvious that we had done precisely the same thing ourselves. The discovery of an arsenal at Padova constituted our first strong point. Spalanza was no longer a tub-thumping anarchist, a political extremist sailing just within the law, but a dangerous influence that had already made careful preparations to plunge Italy into the sea of blood that we, mercifully, had avoided. So much for that! Sabino and the other ringleaders are under lock and key, headquarters have been raided and the documents now in our hands are more enlightening even than those your friend obtained for us some little time back."

Wells listened open-mouthed.

"You have arrested Spalanza?"

Alberti shook his head.

"In his case, I must confess, we have been less careful. For my part, I sincerely hope he makes good his escape. Should he fall into our hands we should have no alternative but to execute him, and it might not be policy to execute Spalanza. You see, we are on sufferance. Time will show whether we are to be permitted to take root and flourish, or step aside to allow our country to drift back into the old order of things—or worse. With these prominent rebel leaders there is always the danger of their being regarded as martyrs, and men have accomplished much after death that they could not bring about when living."

A fat, red arm, brushing against Wells' shoulder, accompanied a heaped plate of *risotto*.

"Then Spalanza has escaped?" he inquired, as soon as the girl had gone.

The Italian was stirring up the rice.

"He is making for the French frontier," he said in a low voice. "Should he attempt to cross it, no serious effort will be made to stop him at the passport control. It is perhaps sufficient to assure you that elaborate precautions have been taken to prevent him turning back into Italy. He has shaved off his beard and keeps as far off the beaten track as possible, providing us, in fact, with every excuse for letting him slip through our fingers."

He thrust forward a much-fingered card, marking an item with his thumb. "What would you like to follow? Macaroni with mushrooms! What do you say to that?"

Wells raised his hands in horror.

"My dear Signor Alberti, there are limits to all things! Carry on with your macaroni, by all means; but don't drag *me* into it. I've already demolished a small mountain of the rice stuff."

"As you will; but you must have something else."

"I'll try a little fish, thanks. You were saying that Spalanza was making a bolt for it. I wonder if you are wise

in letting him go. He might slip back into Italy later on and start a fresh campaign."

The Italian blinked at him through his tinted spectacles.

"The chances are, my friend, that he will not live to come back."

Wells started. He thought he was beginning to see why Alberti had deliberately knocked into him in the Via Venti Settembre.

"You don't intend that he should?"

The other bent across the table.

"Surely I have already made it clear to you that we wash our hands of the man? If his period of existence on this earth is suddenly curtailed, it will be the result of a purely personal feud."

The Englishman fingered his glass nervously.

"But you will be behind the instrument!"

"To a certain extent our sympathies will be with the assassin. Spalanza is an evil genius, and, in our present unsettled state, we have little room for anyone coming under that category."

Baring-Wells leaned back in his chair and thrust both hands in his pockets. He stared for some moments at the ceiling, then brought his gaze back to his host.

"You want *us* to exterminate this—evil genius!"

"Not in the least, *amico mio*. The other party to this purely personal feud has already started on her mission of vengeance."

Wells clapped his hand to a moist brow. The room seemed to be whirling round him and he wished with all his heart that Ferring was with him. Among the many things that bewildered him, Alberti's reason for summoning him took an easy first.

"The Signorina Patrini," he gasped.

His companion nodded.

"You will agree with me that the quarrel is an old one. Pasqua Patrini has unearthed sufficient evidence to entitle her to believe that Spalanza killed her father. In some parts of Italy the spirit of vendetta is not yet dead. That is precisely why I brought you here. Our executive is secretly delighted at this opportunity of ridding itself of a most deadly enemy; but I am an old man and perhaps a little old-fashioned. In this vast maze of political intrigue what you choose to term 'petticoat influence' plays an important part. I myself have unhesitatingly employed this weapon in certain delicate cases; but I stop short of homicide, however justifiable. There is another side of the affair that interests me vastly. Your friend Signor Ferring is hopelessly attached to Pasqua Patrini. I might almost say that an understanding exists between these two. Pasqua is a very beautiful and charming woman, but no man on this earth could relish the idea of marriage with a tragic adventuress who had taken life with her own hands. Frankly, I like Ferring and, apart from all personal feeling in the matter, he has never hesitated to come to my assistance when the occasion demanded. Well, there you are! I have summoned you as a disinterested party,

*The flickering light fell on a huddled form,*

*A white face peered wonderingly up at him.*

and you must treat my information as you think fit. Here is the good Amalia with your fish. You have plenty of time to eat it, because Spalanza will not reach Modane before to-morrow evening, and I scarcely imagine much will happen before then. Don't forget what I have already told you; he has shaved his beard."

"There are few men so enormous as Spalanza. I hardly think we should mistake him. It should be a remarkably interesting encounter. Spalanza hates Ferring; Pasqua entertains similar feeling towards Spalanza; while I have only a nodding acquaintance with either!"

The little Italian wiped his glasses.

"Hitherto," he said, without looking at Wells, "we have detained you both in Italy because it served our purposes to keep you here. From this moment you are free to depart. I should go up to Modane to-morrow by the train that arrives at six in the evening. Stay at the Mont Cenis Hotel, just opposite the station. If anything further should transpire, I will wire you there. Convey to my esteemed friend Ferring my sincerest thanks for the many valuable services he has rendered. Words can hardly express how very pleasant our rather brief association has been for me. As far as concerns this last episode, remember that once you set foot in Modane you are in France and subject to French law. If you are contemplating anything desperate, it would be well to keep that in mind."

Baring-Wells' long fingers drummed on the surface of the table.

"I scarcely think we need anticipate extreme measures. Unless we are extremely unlucky, we should corner Miss Patrini as soon as she leaves the passport office. We could dine quietly in a private room somewhere, and leave for Paris without worrying our heads

Alberti rested his chin on his hands, his beard thrust forward over them like a pointer.

"Could you?" he demanded innocently.

"Certainly. Why not? I know Modane pretty well."

"I don't doubt it; but you don't know Pasqua Patrini. She may not consent to come with you."

"That's Ferring's affair, and, in the circumstances, the lady in question should not require much persuasion."

"Not in normal circumstances. But what if the conditions are abnormal? It is quite possible that Pasqua has sworn to destroy her father's murderer."

Wells' eyebrows almost met.

"Meaning to say that you know she has taken this oath and are convinced she is in a mood to place vengeance before everything—even before the man she has promised to marry!"

"You have missed your vocation, Signor Wells. You should have been a detective!"

Baring-Wells stared gloomily at the label of an empty wine-bottle. He could never fathom the depths of this extraordinary man's character. At moments he seemed a kindly, benevolent creature, bubbling over with the milk of human kindness; at others an accomplished actor, playing each fresh part that fell to him with consummate skill; again, a ruthless disciple of that complicated cult of intrigue that is always part and parcel of South European politics. He was grateful to them for their help, desperately anxious to drag Pasqua from the crucible into which she had thrown herself, and yet— Through the mist that enveloped Wells' brain a faint light flickered.

"Good lord!" he stammered in horror, the enormity of the plot gradually dawning upon him. "You have told me that Spalanza is escaping with the girl at his heels, knowing that I should have to tell Ferring, knowing, too, that Ferring has no alternative but to follow. Pasqua won't give up the pursuit while her enemy lives. Ferring must either throw up all hopes of happiness——"

"He won't do that!" interjected the other coldly.

"—Or one of us must see that Spalanza does not live!"

Alberti was bobbing his head to and fro like a Chinese figure.

"It is sometimes queer into what streets the love of a beautiful woman leads us!" he murmured sententiously.

Baring-Wells brought his fist on to the table.

"But, man alive, it's murder!"

"Not necessarily. There might be an accident. Quite sane people have been known to walk out of trains while in motion and when the sleeping-car attendant is dozing. Travelling long distances always entails certain risks; any insurance company will tell you that. There is a long tunnel a bit before you come to Modane which appears to me to offer immense possibilities. Think it over."

It was then that the Englishman did one of those extraordinary things that appear to confirm the ubiquitous notion that the race is one of lunatics.

He sprang to his feet, tipping the contents of the table into Alberti's lap, and, snatching up his hat, rushed headlong into the street.

He found Alan Ferring reclining in an armchair in a corner of the smoking room of the Hotel Savoia. He glanced from the magazine he had been reading.

"You're a bright specimen! I thought we'd agreed to lunch at the Bristol?"

Wells dropped down beside him.

"Fearfully sorry to have kept you on tenterhooks and all that, but I knocked into Alberti in the Venti Settembre, and eventually lunched with him in a filthy hole near the Campo Santo."

Ferring's blue eyes opened wide.

"The devil you did!"

"He exhibited the knotted cord and I had no other alternative." He wormed his long frame into a more comfortable position. "I never realized until this afternoon what an infernal old scoundrel Alberti is."

Ferring grunted.

"He's paid us pretty handsomely up to now for everything we've done."

"I know all about that. He paid because he had to. You ran the figure higher every time, and he couldn't object, because we were the only two lunatics available for the class of work he had in hand. Now *you're* going to pay!"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean Spalanza's bolted for France, and they've sent Miss Patrini after him —to kill him. They daren't arrest him, because they don't quite know what to do with him when they've got him. Alberti's played on Pasqua's feelings to such an extent that she's sworn to avenge her father."

Ferring's boyish face had gone a shade paler.

"We must go after her—and stop her," he said.

Baring-Wells gripped at the arms of the chair with both hands.

"I knew you'd say that. Alberti knew it, too. Can't you see the devilish cunning behind it all? He's not satisfied that she'll do the job. He thinks that she might fail at the last moment or show her hand too soon."

"Well?"

"So he plays for safety. He makes deuced sure that somebody'll be there who has never failed him yet."

"Myself?"

"Exactly."

"But, my dear old idiot, I haven't the least intention of slaying the leader of the Moving Finger Gang. I'm merely out to prevent Pasqua from making a fool of herself. The one thing I've been hoping for all these blessed months is to join her somewhere out of Italy, and remind her of a certain promise she once made me in a corn-field outside Turin on the night I stole Spalanza's car. If Alberti's schemed all this, he's done me no end of a good turn."

"Think again," implored the other bitterly. "Pasqua's sworn to put revenge before anything. Once her enemy's dead, she'll accompany you to the ends of the earth, if you wish; but not till then."

Ferring clasped his hands behind his head and stared at the ceiling.

"I see," he murmured presently. "It's like that, is it?" He came suddenly to his feet and perched himself on the arm of Wells' chair. "So the goose that lays the golden eggs is fizzling out! Alberti's used us for all he's worth, and now he's no longer any need for us it's *'Addio, signori!'* How do we stand, old thing? Can we get across the frontier without being stopped?"

"Yes. That's the only part of his story I was really able to believe. Pasqua hopes to assassinate Spalanza at Modane—the frontier town just over the border. They're bound to let us through."

"Good enough! Then we'll beetle off by the first available train and see how far the old scoundrel's predictions are correct. As I've so often explained to you, this policy of intrigue is by no means water-tight. Like a lot of clever people, Alberti doesn't attach sufficient importance to the human element. Life isn't all chess. You can only say what move your piece will make from past experience of its idiosyncrasies. You and I are not consistent, Wells—that's precisely where the weakness of his theory lies—and Pasqua, being a woman, is perfectly capable of changing her mind. Nothing on this earth pans out according to schedule. Sabino thought he'd trapped us in his villa, but he hadn't. When we set out to destroy Spalanza's munition dump, we feared that half Padova would go up with it; but the river came in instead. If we had *tried* to let the river in we could never have done it."

"It was luck—sheer luck."

"Of course it was. And there's no earthly reason why we shouldn't have the same luck on our side this time. After all, why should Spalanza be made to peg out? It would just serve some of these political wire-pullers right if you and I headed him back into Italy—to be a confounded nuisance to them for evermore."

Wells stroked his chin.

"Alberti's a pretty shrewd judge. He tells me that precautions have been taken against any possibility of his getting back."

"A cordon of police, secret agents and the like?"

"I should imagine so."

Ferring slapped his knee and laughed aloud.

"Supposing, by some means or another, we *force Spalanza* back across the frontier, what then? Or, better still, collar him and calmly hand him over to the border police. They couldn't refuse to take him."

"No." He leaned forward excitedly. "By Jove, Alan, that's rather a notion! Alberti would be frightfully sick, of course. Spalanza, although he doesn't realize it, is in a somewhat unique position. He's a much-wanted law-breaker whom the secret service people are doing their best to avoid arresting. Unless I'm much mistaken, the police would jump at the opportunity. We'll get the telegraphic addresses of the principal papers before we leave and wire 'em as soon as the handing-over is effected. The *carabinieri* will hang on to their capture like grim death, and the government won't dare to let him slip because of their reputation. Under the drastic Fascismo regime there is only one penalty for an offence of this sort. Pasqua's father will be avenged without her intervention, your path will be clear, and Spalanza's late adherents will be drawn back to the cause by the sheer fact of their leader's martyrdom. It is quite on the cards the government would have to resign."

"Which would be a pity. I'm all for Fascismo—in the abstract."

"It'd serve 'em right for the way they've treated us," said the taller man. "The question of the moment is — how

exactly we're going to waylay so formidable a gentleman as Spalanza and what means we are to take to persuade him to go with us quietly."

Ferring glanced at his watch.

"When is he due at Modane?"

"About six to-morrow evening."

"Good enough! We'll collect our traps, settle the bill, and make our way there by the best route available. I fancy there's a *train de luxe* which would suit our purpose and land us at our destination in the early hours. We should then have ample time to study the scene of action."

It was raining in torrents when they reached Alessandria and vivid streaks illuminated the glass dome of the station, making its panes appear fresh and clean. The platform was almost deserted save for a round half-dozen belated travellers and a consumptive-looking *capo di stazione* with a tired look in his eyes and a new red top to his official cap.

Ferring rubbed the window with his sleeve and peered out. A stout, little man, with a valise in either hand, came hurrying along from the direction of the booking-office and slipped on a piece of orange-peel. He came down heavily in a puddle that had its origin in the leaky roof, and, conscious only of the loss of dignity, glared at the *capo*.

"It is a disgrace — this station of yours. Don't stand there grinning like a jackass or I shall certainly report this matter to your head office on my return. I am an *avvocato*, you will understand, and I know what I am talking about. *Morta la gallina!*"

Ferring, who had been more amused at the little man's attitude than the fall he had sustained, started at the sound of his voice, and flattened his nose against the glass. A second later Baring-Wells was surprised to see his companion racing for the doorway at the end of the corridor. Ferring emerged bare-headed on to the platform and seized both the Italian's hands.

"Scardovi, or I'm a Dutchman!"

The lawyer blinked up at him in amazement.

"Signor Ferring! My dear boy, I'm delighted! Are you on this train?"

"Of course. How else should I be here?"

"Then you are going to Paris?"

Ferring scratched his chin.

"Eventually," he conceded, "yes. It's just possible, however, I may stop a couple of days at Modane. Give me one of those bags and we'll get aboard. I've a friend travelling with me whom I'd like you to meet. Lord, Scardovi, this is a stroke of luck!"

They had settled down in Ferring's compartment and the train was racing through Fellizano when the lawyer unburdened himself.

"As you are aware, *amico mio*, I rarely leave Italy, but an important client of mine has recently moved to Paris, and has telegraphed to me to join him there. I hope to be back within a week." He rubbed his hands together, his face still flushed with the excitement of their meeting. "Spalanza hasn't killed you yet, I see! Do you remember how his men besieged us in my flat in the Via Plana? And the row at the Trattoria San Pietro?" He whistled through his teeth. "*Per Bacco*, but that was a narrow shave for you! Rumor has it that you have had many similar adventures since. And the charming Pasqua — have you married her yet?"

Ferring shook his head.

"I have only seen her once since then."

Scardovi snapped his fingers.

"Ah, these confounded politics! They are like a drug to some people! You know, of course, that the revolutionary party has collapsed?"

Ferring glanced meaningly at Wells.

"We hope to have our last encounter with its leader at Modane," he said.

Towards Turin the storm increased in violence, at Avigliana it had developed into a veritable tornado, and, a kilometer before Bussoleno, the alarm signal brought the train to a sudden halt.

Baring-Wells let down the window and thrust out his head. He drew it back hastily, mopping his hair.

"What's the matter?" demanded Scardovi and Ferring together.

"It's something to do with the bridge we just passed over. It's raining like the devil outside, but in that last flash it looked as if the bridge had gone and the last car had heeled over on its side."

"Holy Moses!" said Ferring, and reached down his waterproof.

"Where are you going?" Scardovi asked.

"To see if I can be of any use. The poor devils in that car have only the train staff to help them — and they're not good at anything but making beds and taking tips. Coming?"

"I'm with you," said Wells.

Scardovi was not so enthusiastic.

"I must be in Paris to-morrow. Supposing the train leaves without us?"

"We can pick up all the information we want as we go along. We can go the whole length of the train without getting out."

As they reached the corridor they collided with an attendant running the other way. He was as white as if he had seen a ghost.

Ferring barred his way.

"How long are we stopping here?" he inquired.

The man stared at them before speaking.

"How long, signori? How can I say? Unless we get help from Bussoleno we shall be here all night. *Madonna Santa!* What an escape! That bridge should have been repaired years ago. Now the river has flooded, the rear engine is in the stream, and the last carriage overturned!"

"Many people in it?" asked Baring-Wells.

"All the berths were full. It was my car, as it happens, but I was in the next one talking to a colleague." He clapped his hands to his ears. "Their cries are terrible. But what can one do? There is a burst steam-pipe and I am going to get them to cut off the heating."

He was off along the corridor.

There followed for the three friends a nightmare of frenzied effort, hampered at all times by officials who had no notion what to do themselves and yet were ready to hinder unauthorized persons from interfering. The car, a crumpled, pitiful travesty of its former luxurious self, lay like a crippled leviathan on the brink of a raging torrent. A man with a borrowed steward's tunic drawn over embroidered night attire ran to and fro in the deluge, endeavoring to make someone understand that his wife and daughter were in the wreckage. He plunged at Ferring as he came up.

"In what part of the carriage were they?"

"The third from this end, I think, or perhaps the fourth."

The Englishman climbed up, jammed in a window with his elbow, and let himself through. Wells clambered up after him, and Scardovi waited with the other. Presently Wells shouted to him.

"There's a woman here. I'm going to lower her down. Can you see?"

And so the work proceeded. Little by little men came from all parts of the train and lent a hand, while rumor floated through the night of the approach of a breakdown gang from up the line.

Ferring's waterproof was soaked and torn. His hair hung over his face like a wet mop, and his hands and arms were cut and scratched with broken glass. He had crawled almost to the open end, where the rear engine had torn the back of the coach away, and was trying to force open a door directly above him. He thrust it back a few inches and a heavy weight on the other side closed it again. He lay on his back and called.

"Hallo! Is anyone there?"

A woman's voice answered in Italian.

"*Dio mio!* There is somebody at last! I must have been lying here hours!"

"Are you hurt?"

"A little."

He was trying to remember where he had heard the voice before. In that battered tunnel of iron and woodwork everything sounded hollow and unreal.

"Can you roll over towards the berths?"

"There is not much room, but I will try."

When he pushed up the door again it stuck for a moment then swung upwards. He squeezed his way through, dropped the thing back after him, and stood on it. A box of matches had escaped the fury of the storm and he struck one. The flickering light fell on a huddled form and a white face that peered wonderingly up at him.

"Alan!"

The match burnt his fingers, and he found another.

"Pasqua!"

He lifted her to her feet, still unconvinced. It seemed incredible, impossible that it should be she, and yet——

"Pasqua! It is really you — Pasqua Patrini?"

"Of course."

"But why? What are you doing on this train? They told me you were fol-

lowing Spalanza, and that he was coming to-morrow."

She passed a weary hand over her brow.

"Take me out of this, Alan. I'm so tired of being here, and it has been such a shock."

He caught both her arms.

"We are going in a minute, but I want you to listen to me first. I am very angry with you — you know why."

"I am going to avenge my father," she retorted simply.

His grip tightened.

"It is madness — sheer madness. Alberti has made you promise to do this. He is using this obsession of yours to gain his own ends. Listen, *cara.* Spalanza has many enemies; one of them will find him soon enough, it is neither you nor I who'll be the assassin. I am going to take you to England with me; and presently, when things are quieter, we'll come back to Italy. I know a little bay near Porto Fino that'd suit us down to the ground. There's a villa there up among the trees that I'd have bought — if only I'd been sure of you." His voice broke. "You'll come with me, won't you — dear; promise me you'll come."

He tried to make her kiss him, but her lips were cold and unresponsive.

He had drawn her through the upper window and was guiding her back to where his friends stood, when she spoke again.

"*He* escaped sooner than we thought. Alberti wired me at Turin. He did not tell me that you would be here. They thought he was on this train; but I inquired everywhere without getting any news of him. Perhaps he has changed his name."

"He would be sure to do that," said Ferring.

She caught his arm impulsively.

"Alan, I don't want you to be angry with me. I would go with you anywhere, if only he were dead. You did not know my father. He was so kind, so generous. If I had a brother it would have been different. If I had done this thing—would you have forgiven me?"

He did not answer for a moment.

"I would have forgiven you," he told her. "But I could never have married you."

She uttered a little, gasping cry.

"You do not — care for me — so very much!"

"I care for you more than anything on this earth, but I can't explain it, Pasqua. Among all the many queer things I've done in this world, I've stopped short at killing in cold blood." He smiled suddenly. "I don't believe you could do it when it came to the point. Alberti doubted it, too; that was why he sent me after you."

Borne on the wings of the storm, Baring-Wells' voice floated to his ears.

"Alan! Ferring! Is that you?

"Yes. What's the racket?"

"Come over here a minute."

They hurried towards the spot where, in the glare of an acetylene flare that had appeared from somewhere, a group of men stood in a circle around something that lay on the ground.

Ferring pushed his way through.

An immense, clean-shaven Italian lay sprawled at Scardovi's feet.

"We found him on the line," the lawyer explained. "He must have been passing between the coaches when the accident occurred."

"Dead?"

Wells nodded.

Pasqua, who had followed, screamed aloud.

"Alan! Look! It is he — Spalanza! They told me he was on the train."

Ferring stared incredulously from the dead man to Scardovi.

"Spalanza!"

The little lawyer inclined his head.

"*Evviva Fascismo!*" he said softly. "Fate has done for all of us what no human organization could have accomplished with safety. There can be no mistake, I assure you. I should know the poor fellow anywhere — even without his beard."

It occurred to Ferring suddenly that Scardovi had taken off his hat. A weight seemed to have been lifted from his mind. He held out both hands to Pasqua.

"You are satisfied, *cara?*"

She threw herself, sobbing, in his arms.

When he looked up again they were alone. The body of his enemy, Baring-Wells, Scardovi — all had vanished. There was only Pasqua — tired, tear-stained, and infinitely wonderful — at his side, and it dawned on him presently that the storm had ceased.

# THE PERMANENT DEPUTY

(*Continued from page 26*)

'stead of a rattle. If you want to see how good I am, Mr. Dorsey, you just crook that elbow about one per cent of one inch. I'll be drawin' about that time, drawin' out of the side pocket of my coat, too, an' that is not a handy place to get a gun from. Come on, Mr. Dorsey, let's see if you are as good with a gun as you are with a deck of cards."

DeLana's hand came to his hip, fingers curled. The movement did not escape Sam's bright blue eyes. His hand dove into his coat pocket and his gun swept into view. DeLana's hand dropped to his side.

"I reckon so," Sam grated. "You wasn't game to go after your guns, neither of you."

Passion of which they had not thought him capable flooded his face with his hot young blood. His eyes seemed to take in all three of them, though Styers was at his side and DeLana and Dorsey were in front of him.

"There's three of you," Sam whispered out of a thickened throat. "If any of you think you can plug me, go for your guns. I'll get one of you, mebbe two. If I'm lucky I'll get all three. Now, who will be the first man that dies."

His roving eyes caught a glimpse of Styers' face. Styers wet his thick lips.

"Now, now," he said weakly, "you can't pull off anything like this in a hotel room, Mr. Rainey. Why, if you shot even one of us they would send you to the pen for it. You don't want to go to the pen, Mr. Rainey. Why, a man like you would die in the pen—a man from the great open spaces."

"Never mind them great open spaces," Rainey said. "I left them behind when I come here. I'll be goin' back to them before long, but I don't aim to go back till I get what you robbed me of. An' I'll say that all the sidewinders in the world ain't in them great open spaces. You guys has been makin' a heap of noise with your rattlers, but you ain't got the nerve to strike when the strikin' ought to seem good to you. Now, how soon do I get my thousand dollars back?"

"You don't get it back at all," DeLana declared. "Why don't you place us under arrest if you're an officer."

"I'm no officer," Sam said. "If I was I wouldn't pinch you. I don't need no law to do business with you guys. Come clean with that thousand."

"What proof have you that the poker game was crooked?" Dorsey demanded. "Can you name any particular play that was not on the level?"

"No," Sam confessed, "I can't do that. Neither can I name any play that was on the level. That's the point."

"I cleaned you once on your own deal," Dorsey reminded him.

"You did an' that was luck. All I asked for was an even break with the luck. But the hands was runnin' too big. A man holdin' the hands I held could sit in any poker game ever invented and come out at least even. Besides, all you guys has got a sneakin' way about you. That's what convinces me you are a bunch of crooks. This mornin' I asked Styers what his business was and he handed me his card. He sells machines of some kind. Business, however, has been slack on this present trip. It's been so slack that Mr. Styers hasn't even called on any of his old customers."

"How do you know that?" demanded Styers, bewildered.

"Me?" Sam asked, with a sudden grin. "Why, Styers, what I don't know about you could be printed on the end of a pin. Me? Why, I just go around findin' out things about pups like you. What's your business, you other two gents?"

"You're so good at finding out things, find that out," Dorsey grated. "If you didn't have me covered, I'd draw with you, you low scoundrel."

"Low scoundrel is sittin'-room talk," Sam derided. "It don't get to me at all. If you are anxious to draw with me, come to it."

With his left hand he pulled his coat tight against his right hip. With his right hand he dropped the gun back into his pocket.

"Come to it, Dorsey," he whispered.

Dorsey hesitated. In that instant Sam snatched the gun from the pocket. DeLana's curled fingers had gone toward his hip again.

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(*Continued from page 135*)

"I was watchin' you, too, Mr. DeLana," Sam jeered. "Why, there ain't a man of you that can move a hand toward a gun in lessen four-five minutes. What's the use of this foolin'? Styers, where's my thousand?"

"You're insane," Styers said. "You're insane from being alone so much. I've heard of men going mad on the ranges."

"Your hearin's poor," Sam gibed. "I may be insane, but if I am it's an ailment that has come to me since I been associatin' with you guys. Well, this has been a big talk for a silent man. Come around in front of me, Mr. Styers."

Sam's gun flirted briefly in Styers' direction. Styers came around in front of Sam.

"Stand with your back to me."

Sam stood behind Styers and pointed his gun at Dorsey. He spoke no word, just stood there regarding the man with his gleaming eyes. Slowly Dorsey's hand came above the table top. It held a gun, but the butt was toward Sam. Dorsey tossed the gun over on the bed. Sam's gun then came around to cover DeLana. DeLana drew his gun from his hip pocket and followed Dorsey's example. Sam patted Styer's pockets, but found no gun.

"I reckon you are the brains of this party, Mr. Styers," Sam said. "You don't go heeled, do you?"

"I never even owned a gun in my life," Styers declared.

"I reckon if you felt the butt of a good gun in your hand you would get a shiver up and down your spine," Sam laughed. "Them two other guys are tougher nuts than you are, Styers, but I'll be cussed if I don't think more of them than I do of you. You make me think of a plate of half-cooked mush."

He went over to the bed, took up the two guns and put them into his pockets.

"You going to steal them guns?" Dorsey demanded.

"I wouldn't call it stealin'," Sam said. "And if I had the bad luck to be you, still I wouldn't call it stealin'. You don't want to get too promiscuous with names, Mr. Dorsey. Now, Styers, where's that money?"

Dorsey began to laugh, a low, mean, chuckling laugh. The notion that tickled him seemed to strike DeLana, too, for he also laughed in his throat.

"Go on an' pay him, Styers," Dorsey said. "Hand him a thousand."

"Why, you boys are goin' to chip in, aren't you?" Styers whined.

"Nary a chip," DeLana said. "Pay up, Styers."

Styers turned heavily toward a black bag which lay on the foot of the bed. His hand was on the catch of the bag when Sam stopped him.

"Is the bag locked, Mr. Styers?" Sam queried.

"Why, no."

"I'll just open it, then," Sam said. "You might have a gun in there. You didn't have none on you, you know."

"I own no gun," Styers said.

"Step back from the bag," Sam ordered harshly. "Join your friends over there, so's I'll have you in a bunch."

Styers could do no less than obey. Sam walked to the bag and opened it. On top of some clothing lay four packets of bills, bound around with paper bands.

"How much in these packets, Styers?" Sam asked.

"Five hundred," Styers answered.

Sam counted two of the packets and found Styers' statement correct. He put the two in his inside pocket. Then he took a ten from another pocket.

"I don't aim to cheat you," he said, tossing the ten into the bag. "I cashed in for that lonely bill, you'll remember. Well, gents, all business before the meetin' havin' been transacted, I will now leave you an' go down to my waitin' limoozeen. It's been a pleasant an' prosperous meetin' of the board. S'long."

As he moved toward the door, Dorsey stayed him with unlifted hand.

"I am going to call the police as soon as you leave the room," Dorsey declared.

"I'm bettin' this thousand you don't," Sam grinned. Why, the police, if they had any sense, would gather you guys in on general principles. Any takers of the bet? Thought not."

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"We'll meet again, fella," Dorsey growled.

"So speed the happy day," said Sam, and he pulled open the door, backed through it and closed it after him.

Dorsey waited two minutes. Then he clapped his hat on his head and went into the hall. From a hall corner he saw Sam descend in the elevator. Then he ran to the stairs and descended them swiftly. When he gained the lower floor Sam was just leaving the desk. He went to the street. Dorsey gained the entrance and saw Sam walking rapidly away. Dorsey fell in behind him.

Twilight had fallen when Dorsey regained the hotel room. Styers and DeLana looked at him expectantly as he confronted them.

"He went to the Western Union first," Dorsey said. "Then he came away from there and roamed the streets. He looked all around as if he was seeking some one. Pretty soon a girl came round a corner. He almost bumped into her. He took off his hat and said something to her. She whispered one sentence to him and scuttled along. He didn't look around. He went on up the street and returned to the Western Union. He stayed there for half an hour and then they handed a telegram out to him."

"What was in the telegram?" Styers breathed.

"Oh, you poor fish!" Dorsey grated. "How do I know? Do you suppose the company would tell a man what was in another man's telegram? Do you suppose that guy showed it to me?"

"Who was the girl?" DeLana asked, and a suggestion of pallor came into his swarthy face.

"*You* are talkin' sense," Dorsey said. "The girl was Miss Katherine Hale, if you please."

"And he knew her!" DeLana gasped.

"Knew her? Of course he knew her. He was tickled green at seein' her. He was like a pup that finds its long-lost master."

"But she cut him," Styers offered.

"Cut him!" Dorsey exploded. "She didn't cut him. She just didn't want to be seen talkin' to him on the street. That was worse—it was more suspicious than if she had stood there and gassed with him."

"What're we going to do?" Styers whispered.

Dorsey's long fingers curled and uncurled at his sides. His face grew darker from the thick blood that flooded into it. His eyes burned.

"We've got to put that guy away," he said venomously.

## CHAPTER V

After his brief and disappointing encounter with Katherine Hale, though he did not yet know her by that name, Rainey went back to the hotel. He ate his supper but he did not see any of the three men. Sam had a good deal to think about. He knew he had made enemies of that precious trio and he was not in much doubt as to how far they would travel in an effort to get even with him. He did not, of course, know that Dorsey had already pronounced his doom, but he had a notion that some rough stuff was in the offing. That he dismissed with a shrug of his wide shoulders. He'd take chances with that gang any time. They were merely a gang of bunco men, he believed.

He was a little bothered by a sense of shame. What an innocent he had been! He had walked into a crooked poker game with his eyes wide open, deceived by Styers' bogus geniality. Of course he had got his money back and that was some salve, but he now had a hankering to play the game a little harder and a little further with those fellows. What the taxi driver had told him had roused his suspicions. Perhaps the men were not only bunco steerers; they might be something else. Sam was intrigued by the story of the trip the men had taken over beyond the ragtown. He had a week before the girl would need him, whatever her task was to be, and he felt that he might put in the week profitably looking up that lonely house. It would give him something to occupy his mind and he might be able to pay the men back for having had the temerity to cheat him at cards.

But first he wanted to find the girl in blue again. He had a little transac-

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(*Continued from page 137*)

tion with her which he considered of prime importance. He did not know where to find her; he could only go abroad and search for her.

He rose from the table, took up his check and walked over to the cashier's desk. The cashier took his check and money and sifted out change to him. Sam stood and looked at her and she at length raised her cool, inquiring eyes.

"Ma'am," Sam said, "do you know where a fella could buy a good hoss?"

The cashier was used to all sorts of questions. She always answered them as best she could and she was happy when she could give an adequate answer.

"Why, yes," she said, "there's a sales stable over on Monroe Street. You can buy, sell, or rent a horse there."

"Much obliged," said Sam. "Where is this Monroe Street?"

"Turn to your right two blocks and go down a block and half. You'll see a sign on the left-hand side of the street."

Sam found the place without trouble. A cross-eyed man came out of a little office and Sam made known his errand.

"Whadd'ye want, a hoss for show?" the man asked.

"He can look like a cross between a camel, a mule and a giraffe, for all I care," Sam said. "I want a hoss that can travel and stay with it for sixty minutes out of each hour."

"I get yuh," the man said.

He went back into the stable and brought out a rangy roan. The horse was lean and long with a head and barrel that Sam liked at once. He took a look at the animal's mouth.

"How much?" he asked.

"A hundred dollars will buy him and he's worth a hundred more. Six years old and sound as a bullet. Will stay with the road till he drops."

"For cash you'd lemme have a bridle and a saddle for that hundred," Sam said. "I ain't none too flush and I'll be sellin the hoss back to you for about seventy-five in a coupla weeks."

"Yuh want to use him now?" the man asked.

"I'll be back in about two hours," Sam answered. "You have him all shipshape then. I'll leave him here to board when I ain't usin' him."

"I'll be waitin' here for yuh when yuh get back," the man said, as he pocketed Sam's hundred.

Then Sam went forth to find the girl in blue. He did not know where to look for her. He knew he might not find her. She was still in town, however, or had been that afternoon—and if he did not find her to-night he would to-morrow.

For an hour he walked the streets, jostled by the evening throng which flowed along the sidewalks. He went up and down the main street and up and down the cross streets; a number of girls in blue he saw, but none of them was his girl in blue. Half an hour more passed in still futile search. He was about to give up. He decided he would get his horse and ride out beyond the ragtown to the house which the driver had spoken of.

As he passed a moving-picture theatre, one of the lithographs out in front attracted his attention. It was a Western film with a famed movie gent in the leading rôle. The movie gent, in the picture, was astride a big black horse. A fine horse could always bring Sam up short. If he couldn't see a fine horse in the flesh, a picture would serve. He stopped to look at the lithograph. He filled his eye with it and then he had a curious sensation, though not an unusual one. He had a feeling that he was being watched.

Without turning his head, he glanced about him out of the corners of his eyes. A boy and a woman were looking at another lithograph. No one else was near him. The crowd still flowed along the pavement. Sam lifted his head then and scanned the faces of the passing people. None of those faces was familiar to him. Then he turned about and looked in the other direction.

In the ticket booth, head and bust rising above the window ledge, behind gilded bars, was the girl he sought. She was looking straight at him, and as their eyes met she frowned and slowly shook her head. Sam made no movement toward her; he only stood and stared at her. She wore no hat now and he could see her lovely face and her bright hair all in one sweeping glance.

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For a moment Sam was helpless while his heart banged and hammered.

But he could not stand there gaping at her. She had paled; the shake of her head was more vigorous. She wanted him to go away from there and go away pronto. Funny how intent on avoiding him she seemed. Gosh, wasn't he her hired man?

He gathered himself together and walked up to the window. The girl made a mechanical movement toward the strip of tickets sticking out of the slot.

"No ticket," said Sam. "I got to talk to you for a minute."

"You mustn't," she said. "We will be seen. Look at all those people going by."

"What time do you get through work?"

"Eleven o'clock."

"You meet me at the next corner, turnin' toward your right," he said. "I've got to talk to you. There is a matter or two to be straightened out."

The girl looked at the grave face, into the calm deep-blue eyes. She saw here a man who could be set in his ways, a man who had a clean cool brain, but a brain which was likely to cling to one special purpose till the purpose had been carried out. She had to yield.

"I'll meet you," she said, "but only for a moment. It is important that we aren't seen together."

"A minute will be enough," Sam said, and he turned away.

He went back to the writing room of the hotel and put five hundred dollars in an envelope. The envelope he placed in his inside pocket.

As he rose from his seat he saw a man at another desk in a corner. It was Styers. Styers made a quick movement with his head as Sam looked at him and Sam knew that he had been watching him. Sam walked over to him.

"Did you get an eyeful?" he asked insolently.

Styers looked up, blinking.

"Oh, how d'ye do, Rainey," he said. "What do you mean?"

"I saw you was watching me," Sam said. "You saw me tuck my roll in an envelope didn't you?"

"I saw you put part of your roll in an envelope," Styers said.

"Well, I'll tell you," said Sam thoughtfully. "Hereafter when we meet you just keep your eyes off'n me. See? I don't want to get no uncomfortable feelin' in my manly chest that you are spyin' on me."

"Why," Styers said, his face mottling, "I've heard that a cat can look at a king."

"Yeh, an' a coyote ain't got no privileges at all," Sam stated.

"This is a public hotel," Styers said. "I can look about if I like, I think."

Sam laid a hand on Styers' fat arm; his eyes burned down into Styers'. To an onlooker there would have been nothing out of the ordinary in one man's placing his hand on the arm of another to whom he was talking. But Styers felt Sam's long, sinewy fingers bite into his flesh till the finger tips seemed to be pressing into the bone. The florid person winced.

"Take your hand off my arm," he whined. "I'll have you pinched."

"So you said before," Sam blazed, but in a low tone. "Look here, Styers, you know what I'm drivin' at. It ain't a question of your lookin' at me. It's a question of your happenin' into places where I am an' takin' an unnecessary interest in my business. When you come into a place and find me there, it'd be a good idea if you vamoosed. If you are in a place and I come in, the space you occupy could be put to a better use. I ain't got real mad yet, but if I do I'll be liable to push your fat face into your back hair."

He withdrew his hand, glared and left the room. In the lobby he took off his hat and wiped sweat from his forehead. He thought it strange how Styers and his partners now had the power to rouse his wrath. He was being "riled" more than his having been cheated in a poker game seemed to warrant. In the past he had met men as villainous as any of these three—but they had not molested him. These three had jumped him as being easy picking. Mebbe the easy picking angle was what had got his goat. He guessed so, now that he thought of it.

# THE PERMANENT DEPUTY

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In the lobby he sought a secluded corner beyond the telephone exchange and sat down. He could see nearly all of the lobby, but he could not be seen by anyone sweeping the lobby with a cursory glance.

It was now nearly ten o'clock. He had an hour before he would meet the girl in blue. He wanted to see if Styers or either of the other two men went out.

Presently Styers came to the lobby from the writing room. He looked about, but he did not see Sam. Presently, while he stood there, he was joined by Dorsey and then by DeLana. Each of these looked about the lobby, but apparently did not see Sam. They moved to chairs and sat down with their backs toward the watcher. As Dorsey took his seat, Sam saw his hand touch his hip pocket.

"Heeled, eh?" Sam said to himself. "Made you dig up another gun, didn't I?"

He had his own gun in his pocket; Dorsey's and DeLana's guns were in his suitcase upstairs.

The three men talked earnestly for half an hour, their heads bent close together. Then DeLana and Dorsey rose and left the hotel; Styers sought the elevator. Sam had now only half an hour and he wanted to take up his stand at the corner where he had promised to meet the girl. He did not want to leave the place by the front entrance, however. He had a notion that the two men were in the street waiting for him to come out or to come in.

He walked over to the telephone operator.

"Is there a side entrance to the hotel?" he asked. "I was lookin' for a fella to come an' meet me an' he ain't showed up. I was watchin' the front entrance."

"Why, yes," she said. "Go along the hall in front of the writing room and turn to your left."

Sam thus made his way to the street. A glance showed the writing room to be deserted. A man who was neither Dorsey nor DeLana was standing in the side entrance. Sam passed him and went into the street. People were passing on both sides, but Sam did not pick out the face of either of the two men.

He turned to his right so that he would go down the side street and around the block and come up to the corner where he was to meet the girl. Now and then he glanced back to determine whether he was being followed. He could see no one. Dorsey, stepping from doorway to doorway, almost running between times, proved himself an artful dodger. When Sam turned into the next main thoroughfare, Dorsey was not fifty feet from him; and when Sam took up his station at the selected corner, Dorsey was hidden in the shadows of a building from which no lights shone.

Sam stood on one foot and then on the other. He was not strong on etiquette, but he had a faint notion that maybe he was breaking some of the rules of the social game in asking this young girl to meet him on a street corner at this late hour. She had caught him up in a strange game, however, and that was his only excuse.

After what seemed a long time to Sam a clock near by boomed eleven times. Sam stepped out to the angle of the sidewalk so that he would be standing in the best light the corner afforded. He looked in the direction of the picture house, his arms folded on his chest, his head bent. The picture house was only half a block away and presently he saw the lights in front of it go out. Five minutes passed and no girl appeared. Then there was a rapid rush of small feet toward him from across the street. A girl passed him and stepped into a store entrance. He had a glimpse of a blue dress. He stepped up to the entrance. The girl looked at him from beneath her veil.

"I shouldn't have come here," she breathed. "What do you want?" Hurry."

Sam drew the envelope containing the five hundred from his pocket and held it out to her.

"There's your money," he said. "I want you to take it back."

The girl's hand went to her heart. She swayed a little. She did not at once stretch out a hand for the envelope.

# THE PERMANENT DEPUTY

(*Continued from page 140*)

"Oh," she whispered, "aren't you going to help me? Don't you trust me? Or has something happened that has made you afraid?"

"I trust you, lady," Sam said gravely. "And I'm not afraid, though considerable has happened to me. It's nothin' that concerns you an' your business, however. I've looked into your eyes, ma'am, an' I know they are honest eyes. I don't think you would lead a man into anything that wasn't strictly on the level."

"That might be a matter of opinion," she said.

"Your opinion would suit me, ma'am."

"You are sure?"

"Quite sure."

"But you mustn't give this money back to me," she said in the same breathless tone. "You will need it. I gave it to you so that you would have funds to stay at that hotel. I will want you there when I call for you in about a week. You have no money of your own."

"I've got close to a thousand dollars," Sam said. "And it's my own money. Servin' you, I would like to paddle my own canoe. It don't look to me like a girl workin' in a picture show office has any five hundred to throw away. Take your money, ma'am."

"And you will not fail me?" she questioned. "You will be at the hotel for a week or ten days, till you hear from me?"

"I will be right there," Sam promised. "You can bet that five hundred on me, ma'am."

"And when I tell you what I want you to do, you will do it?"

"I will do anything that is straight, ma'am, if it will help you," Sam answered.

"You will let me decide whether it is straight or not?" she asked.

Before the ranchman's eyes came the picture of her lovely face as he had seen it at the station and in the box office. Why, if a man couldn't pin his faith to a girl with a face like that, then there wasn't nothin' a man could pin his faith to, said Sam Rainey to himself.

"I'll leave the decision to you, ma'am," he declared, with a little bow.

"Oh," she said, "I knew you were a good man. I must go now."

"I'll see you safe home," Sam offered.

"No, no. You mustn't. We mustn't be seen together at all. Don't speak to me again till you hear from me at the end of the week. You might spoil everything."

"You're goin' at least to give me your name, ain't you?" Sam asked.

"No, I can't. You might be asked if you knew any one by my name and that would be disastrous."

Passing him, she laid a hand briefly on his arm. Sam glowed. He had an impulse to detain her for a moment longer, but he did not yield to the impulse. She fled around the corner, leaving Sam a little more bewildered than he had been before.

For a moment he hesitated. Then he went to the corner and turned in the direction the girl had taken. He didn't like the idea of her being abroad at this hour alone. He could see her hurrying along ahead of him. He hurried after her, keeping the distance between them. She passed the next intersection and so did he. They came into a warehouse district. There were street lights only at the corners. The squat drab buildings were without illumination. Sam lost the girl in the darkness.

Across the street there was the crack of a gun. Out of the corner of his eye, Sam caught the flash of flame. The bullet spatted against the side of the building behind him. Another bullet followed suit. Sam had wheeled and he saw the flash of flame was in a black doorway across from him. Rage swept him. He flashed out his gun and as the gun came up he pressed the trigger and tossed a bullet into that black doorway. His gun ready, he took two forward steps. Then he stopped. There was no more firing. But from around the corner which he had lately passed came the sound of padding footsteps; Sam had never heard precisely that sound before, but he could guess what it was. A man in blue uniform had been at-

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tracted by the sound of the shots and he was about to investigate so unlawful a procedure on his beat.

Sam pocketed his gun and ran. He was not a good runner ordinarily, but he burned the sidewalk now. He was around the corner beyond him as the policeman gained the other corner. The policeman stopped and looked around. Sam just kept on going. His was the desire of a man who must be somewhere else immediately.

In ten minutes he walked calmly into the hotel. Styers, sitting in one of the big chairs, looked at him wide-eyed. Sam walked up to him, leaned down.

"A miss is as good as a mile, you sucker," said Sam icily. "Tell Dorsey and DeLana that and also tell 'em I'm shootin' at the first hostile move from this time forth."

Styers went white. His lips moved, but no words came from them. He lifted a trembling hand to his fat chin.

"Gosh," Sam breathed, "fear is a boon companion of yours, ain't it? I didn't know any man could get as scared as you are now an' I'm just *talkin'* to you. How'd you feel if I went into action with my blood boilin' over the top, eh? I reckon you'd have a first-class faintin' fit, Styers, and I wouldn't wonder if that was what was comin' to you."

He stepped back, grinning, and regarded Styers with contempt in his eyes. Styers, he saw, was a physical coward. That was something to remember for future use.

## CHAPTER VI

Sam took a seat across from Styers. It was now midnight and the lobby was almost deserted. Now and then Styers glanced quickly at Sam, as if he wondered what Sam was staying up for. The latter sat motionless, his arms folded on his chest, his eyes fixed on the far wall. He did not seem to be observing Styers, but no move which the fat man made was lost on him.

At a quarter past twelve Dorsey came into the lobby. He caught sight of Styers and hastened to him. He did not see Sam at first, but Sam, looking directly at the two men now, noticed a movement of Styers' lips. Dorsey wheeled around and stared at Sam. Sam's eyes were again fixed on the far wall.

Dorsey sat down. DeLana came in and went up to the two men. Dorsey whispered to him, but apparently cautioned him to betray no interest, for DeLana did not turn.

"It's somebody's move," Sam said, "and it might as well be mine. Here I go, boys. Let's see what you're up to."

His passage to the desk carried him close to the three men. DeLana stood with his back to him; Dorsey had sat down beside Styers. As Sam went by, Dorsey looked up at him. His eyes were filled with a black and brooding hate. Sam grinned into his face and Dorsey stirred in his chair, a sort of growl issuing from his lips.

"You'll done get bit if you don't watch yourself," Sam said. "Or if you don't get bit, you'll wear the overcoat off'n your teeth, grindin' them like that."

"You——" Dorsey breathed.

Sam stopped and then stepped up to the man. Dorsey's hairy hands clutched the back of the chair. Sam could see a nerve twitching in the bulge above the thumb.

"Hangin' on so you won't go for your gun, are you?" Sam sneered. "Why don't you go for it? Huh? I'll let your paw get halfway on its journey. You wouldn't want no better start than that, would you?"

"You've got nerve in a public place like this, haven't you?" Dorsey sneered in his turn.

"Just as much nerve as you had when you stood in the dark an' blazed away at me," Sam retorted.

"And as much nerve as you had when you ran," Dorsey said.

"I'm livin' to fight another day," Sam declared. "Another day or another night, it'll be all the same to me. You watch yourself from now on, fella."

"I'll be watching *you*," Dorsey promised.

"And you'll get an eyeful."

# THE PERMANENT DEPUTY

(*Continued from page 142*)

Sam's contemptuous eyes swept the group. Then he left it and went up to the desk. In the elevator he slipped a dollar to the boy.

"Make a quick stop at the second floor and let me hop off," he said. "Then go on to the top and don't be in too big a hurry to come down, even if the bell rings. If three gents gets into your buggy and asks about me, you tell 'em I went on to my room. Hear me, son?"

"I heah yo', yassuh," the black boy said.

He stopped at the second floor and swung back the gate. Sam stepped out. The elevator went on up. Sam waited for a moment and then he went to the stairs. Creeping down these, he gained the lower floor. The lights in the writing room had been turned off and he reached the obscurity of that room without being seen. From where he stood he commanded a view of the elevator. He saw the boy bring it to the main floor and open the gate. In a few minutes the three men entered it and were carried aloft. Sam slipped out the side door. Ten minutes later, on the back of his new horse, he was riding hard over the road to the lonely house which the taxi driver had spoken of.

Sam was no analyst, but he could do a little common-sense figuring without the aid of a lead pencil. He had purposely baited Styers and then Dorsey so that they would be goaded into immediate action against him. He wanted to rouse their anger. If they grew hotheaded and he remained cool, the advantage would be his. He knew that an angry man is very likely to make a misplay. He wanted them to have no time to plot. He believed that his insults would send them to his room that night. And he also believed that when they found he was not in the room, they would head for the house which was his own destination.

This latter, he was aware, was only a long shot in the dark. The men, of course, would not know that he had any information about their rendevous. But in the back of their minds they would always be thinking about that place. Sam had no doubt now that they were not only card sharps, but that they were crooks in other ways. The telegram he had in his pocket convinced him of that. Fear, then, would lead them to believe that Sam had discovered their hiding place and had gone there. They would probably come this way to discover what they could.

He would welcome them, for the contempt he had shown them was a genuine feeling. He did not think that any of them were overburdened with brains. They did not think things out well. If they had, they would never have hired a public conveyance to take them to their hiding place. If they had hired such a conveyance and had been men who figured the details of everything they did, they would have bribed the taxi driver. Sam would not have been able to buy the driver as cheaply as he had bought him. And Sam believed that they were cowards. Styers was the biggest coward of them all. DeLana and Dorsey had the nerve to handle guns, but they were cowardly enough to shoot from the dark. With men like them the odds of three to one were not great.

As Sam sped his horse over the dirt road he went into this situation in greater detail. If his figuring was correct, the three men would want to get out here in all haste. Naturally, they would hire a cab. He did not believe they had a car of their own. Very well. He would be looking out for the cab.

He came after a while to the ragtown which the driver had spoken of. Except for lights in one squat huddled building, the village was in darkness. As Sam drew nearer he could hear the sound of a violin from this building and now and then bursts of laughter. Probably a dance was being held. These folks, he supposed, led the life which folks always led in new places. White whiskey was probably flowing freely over there in the rude shack.

Sam rode through the town without meeting any one. Beyond the town the road narrowed and became rougher. After a while it was little more than a newly broken trail. His horse could negotiate it, but he knew that a car could not. Therefore he must be somewhere

# THE PERMANENT DEPUTY

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near the house, for the taxi had taken the three men close to it on the previous occasion.

He drew his horse to a walk and leaned forward in the saddle as he peered from side to side. He had gone but a hundred yards when he saw the house. It was almost hidden from view from the road. A clearing had been made back among the trees and these grew in front and in the rear and on both sides. To what purpose the house had originally been put heaven only knew. Perhaps some one had used it as a sort of hunting lodge.

Sam rode past it, looking for a light, but there was none. He kept on for an additional hundred yards and then dismounted and hitched his horse to a tree. The trees put the road in shadow; clouds were now obscuring the moon. Sam went back along the road and in among the trees. Presently he stood at the front door of the house. He saw now that it was built of unhewn logs. There were two windows in front and the door before which he stood was wide and built of thick oak planks. It seemed to have been especially made for its present purpose, for it was of no standard size.

Sam was now confronted with the problem as to whether the house was tenanted. He did not suppose it was, but he must believe that it was until he could prove it was not. If it were not tenanted, caution would only be thrown away and no harm would be done. If it was tenanted, he could not be too careful. In the latter event his adventure could easily terminate unhappily.

He decided against trying to enter from the front. If anyone was in the house he was doubtless sleeping in the front room. If he was a good watchman the least noise would awaken him.

Sam went around the corner of the house. In the rear he found that a lean-to of rough boards had been built against the logs. He crept beneath a side window and came to a rear door. This, too, was of solid oak. To his right Sam saw a square window. He went to it and examined it carefully. He saw that it swung into the room beyond and he gently pressed against it. It moved about half an inch. Still there was no aperture between the window and the casing. He judged that the loose window had pushed back against a button which in its turn had worked loose on the nail which held it. Such a button would be easy to break off.

Sam did not at once exert his strength on it, however. What he had got out of life had come hard to him. He had no faith in easy things. This looked a little too easy. A man would be a fool to secure himself by heavy oaken doors and then leave this loose window as a means of entrance for the first would-be intruder. An armed man might be standing back of that window even now.

He stepped back among the trees till he found a broken branch as thick as his wrist. Creeping back to the window, he stooped and struck the bottom of the window a smart blow with the knotted end of the branch. He heard the button fall within the room. For a space he waited, but there was no further sound. Crouching still, he pushed the window wide with the end of the branch. Then there was a roar within the house and charges from a double-barreled shotgun passed over Sam's head. He sprang back along the house, his gun flashing into his hand.

## CHAPTER VII

He waited, crouching, scarcely daring to breathe. But after the echoes of the blast had died away, there was no sound to break the stillness of the night. Within the house all was silence. Sam couldn't solve the puzzle. Some one had fired a double charge through the window. Any one standing beyond the window must have been brought down. Why had not the marksman made a move to discover what the result of his attack had been. Sam had fully expected to see him at the window immediately.

"That fella must have iron nerves," he told himself. "Prob'ly he is standin' back there waiting to see what will happen. He don't take no chances. For sure he ain't a muddle-head like Styers. And he don't get excited like

# THE PERMANENT DEPUTY

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them other two. By gosh, mebbe I have run up against the brains of this outfit."

It occurred to him then that the man might leave the house by the front way and come creeping up behind him. He threw a glance over his shoulder but there was only silence there.

"If you came, you'd come from that direction anyhow," Sam told himself. "I better be movin' in the other direction. Mebbe you an' me will have to play a little hide and seek, fella."

He passed swiftly under the window and came to the other corner of the house. A glance around the corner disclosed no movement on that side. He crept along till he came to the next corner. No one was in front of the house. The heavy door was still closed and the windows appeared not to have been open.

"Dog-gone my hide, this gets me," Sam said. "It ain't no game for a fair-minded fella to be playin'. For a fact it's kind of spooky. I wish that guy would let out a yell or somethin' just to break this stillness."

He was conscious of a trickle of perspiration on his cheek; it had run down from beneath his hat band.

"Fella, you got me sweatin' an' that ain't no fair," said Sam. "I got to get my pores closed or I might ketch cold. The only way I see to close 'em is to rout you out an' have a look at you. When I can size you up, I will go back to normal. I ain't afraid of anything I can see, fella."

The first step in routing out his unseen foe was to create a diversion. He stepped in among the trees till his foot encountered a big stone. He picked this up and returned to the front of the house. Then he sent the stone crashing through one of the front windows. Stepping back among the trees again, he waited, but unbroken silence still wrapped the house. Sam took off his hat and scratched his head.

"That guy is the best waiter ever I see," he told himself. "And me, I'm losin' time. If them other three fellas are headed this way they will be here before long an' then I will have them on my hands, too."

Cautiously he returned to the rear of the house, stooping as he passed the side window. He regained his place beneath the window through which the shotgun charge had come. Still there was no sound.

'Gosh, fella," he said, "I don't believe you even breathe—do you?"

In addition to hearing nothing, Sam could not *feel* any sort of presence near him. He was quite sure that a presence, so near as that in the room would have had to be, would have disclosed itself to that sixth sense which comes to a man leading the life he had lead. He was only conscious of being alone.

Moving back from the window and standing a little to one side of it, he sent a bullet through it. No reply to that. He sent a second bullet. Silence.

Returning to the window, he put his hat on the branch he had used and lifted the hat till it was was just above the sill. No shot riddled the hat. Then Sam Rainey grinned.

"I just wonder!" he said to himself.

He stood up so that head and shoulders were above the sill. He found himself peering into a room in which there was neither light nor sound. Drawing himself up, he dropped through the window and looked above his head. As his eyes became accustomed to the dark, he could see that a thin, strong rope was attached to the window, ran up to the ceiling, along that, and descended to a connection with a shotgun which was leveled toward the window by means of other cords.

He went up to the gun and examined it. The cord went back to the far wall. There it dropped down over a spool. Then it came forward across another spool and down to a third. From the third spool it came forward to the trigger of the shotgun. When the window was pushed back the cord was pulled forward; the pull was reversed by means of the spools and the trigger drawn back.

"Fairly neat all the way around," said Sam. "You fellas lock everything up tight and then you leave a loose window with this trap beyond it. I reckon that must be Dorsey's trick. He's just about speedy enough for that."

# THE PERMANENT DEPUTY

(*Continued from page 145*)

He did not wish to strike a light, since he had wasted so much time and did not know how near the trio might be if they had decided to visit the house, and he groped on the floor till he found the button from the window. Going into the other room, he found the stone he had crashed through the front window and with this he drove the nail back into the button. He had of course no shells for the shotgun, but he cocked it so that it would look as if the trigger had not been pulled. Then he went on a tour of the building.

By now his eyes were accustomed to the light and he could distinguish objects. The room in which he found himself was furnished with a table, a chair and a stove. In the other room there were several chairs, a rough table and a heating stove. The place was certainly barren enough. Sam felt that he had risked his life and wasted his time for nothing. It appeared that the men had been making only a childish use of the house. Retiring to the house to discuss their affairs had doubtless appealed to their vanity. It threw a cloak of secrecy about them. So thought Sam, but he was no analyst and he held these men in contempt.

From a survey of the room his eyes went to the ceiling. He saw that there was a trap-door in it. This interested him; it stirred his imagination. With youth's volatility, he veered away from his theory that the three men had been making believe when they had visited the house. He reckoned mebbe there was something beyond that trap-door.

This notion renewed the caution which he had allowed a mere theory to displace. He was glad to get that caution back. He remembered that it had saved him from having his head blown off by the shotgun and he decided to hug it to his manly chest from this time forth. He saw that the chairs in the room were set back against the wall and that the table was not beneath the trap-door.

"Uh, huh," said Sam understandingly, the first thing them gents would see on enterin' this room would be a chair or a table under that door. Ain't they cute?"

He placed one of the chairs under the door and standing on it tried to raise the door, but it would not raise. Then he saw that an indentation had been cut at one end of the door. He put his fingers into this, pressed away from that end, and the door slid along. He took hold of the side of the opening thus made and with both hands swung himself clear of the chair. Holding the chair between his feet, he swung back and forth till he could drop the chair against the wall as it had been. It teetered on two legs for a moment and seemed about to fall and then it settled back almost in the exact position in which Sam had found it. Sam then drew himself up through the door.

Striking a match, he looked about him. The peak of the roof was above his head, but it was not high enough to permit him to stand erect and it sloped down till there was no space between the floor and the roof. While the match burned he looked all around, but he found nothing except a low flat box at one end of the room. Since that was the only object there, it was the only one he could examine, though he had little expectation that he would be repaid. He took a step toward the box and then he stopped. Dropping to his knees, he slid the trap-door back into place. He knelt in utter darkness.

His swift action had been prompted by the sound of the clicking of a lock. He had observed that there was a big keyhole in the front door and now some one seemed to have turned a key in it. The sound of the turning of the key was marked because, Sam supposed, the door was not unlocked frequently and had gone rusty.

Following the sound, there was a glimmer of light at the far end of the attic. Sam surmised that some one below had turned on a flashlight. The light was flowing into the attic between the logs and the end of the poorly fitted joists. Sam heard the door softly closed. Then came Styers' voice:

"I knowed he wouldn't be here. I tell you the thing we got to depend on most is the front I'm able to put up. You fellows made a mistake routing out that taxi driver and questioning him. You

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just made him think and thinking is bad in a man that we have used to bring us out here."

"Oh, let him think," DeLana said. "We found Rainey hadn't had any cab. That was the main point."

Sam voted a ten dollar bill for the taxi driver.

"I'd like to wring the neck of whoever threw that stone through the window," said Dorsey. "If passers-by get interested in this place, they'll be comin' in here first thing we know."

"If they come in by a certain window, they won't get very far," Styers said. "We better see if the gun is in place all right."

Sam heard them go into the rear room. Presently they came back and for a while there was silence. The flashlight had been turned off and there was darkness, too. Then there was a sudden exclamation from one of the men below.

"Say," came Dorsey's voice, "there's somethin' wrong here. Where's that stone that came through the window?"

Silence, then mutters of astonishment. Chairs were pushed back. Sam knew the men were on their feet, staring at each other in the dark.

"Somebody's been in the house," Dorsey said.

There was the sound of running feet toward the rear room, then the sound of a returning.

"The stone is lyin' out there by the window," Dorsey said. "It couldn't have been thrown there. Somebody's been in here."

"How's the gun?" DeLana asked.

There was another space of silence. Then Dorsey spoke again:

"Both barrels have been fired."

There was silence once more—deep silence.

This was broken by a thin, high, nervous laugh—Styers' laugh, Sam judged.

"I think," said Styers, "that someone better look outside that rear window."

The deeper laughter of the two other men came to Sam's ears. It was unholy laughter, denoting the glee that men like Dorsey and DeLana could feel at thought of a decapitated man lying outside that window. Sam shivered, but only in disgust. His fingers tightened on the butt of his gun.

"I'll name you a committee of one to go have a look, Styers," said Dorsey, and his laugh was sardonic now.

"Why, you're better at that sort of thing than I am, Dorsey," Styers whined. "You don't mind it."

"That precious front of yours cracks wide open in an emergency, don't it?" Dorsey sneered. "You bet I'm the man that'll take a look. I was kiddin' you, Styers. You got a white lily for a liver."

Sam heard Dorsey leave the room. In a moment he was back.

"Everything's all wrong," he said. "The shot from that gun went through the window—most of it; some of it is buried in the wall inside. That guy opened the window with this stick, keepin' out of range himself. By heaven, I told you guys he was clever. He's been here and gone."

"Gosh," Styers broke out in a shivering voice, "he may be outside now, ready to shoot us when we come out."

"Haven't I just been outside, you poor fish?" Dorsey demanded.

"Well, what're you going to do?" Styers quavered.

"We ain't goin' to let you risk your precious carcass," Dorsey said. "You stay here. Me and DeLana will go out and look around. If that fella is laying for us, he is out in front someplace. If he was in the rear he would have got me when I went out there.'

Sam heard them leave. Styers was thus left alone in the room downstairs. For a space there was the sound of Styers' restless feet as he moved about the room. Sam knew that the man was nervous. He was a salesman turned desperado and he was not making a very good job of it.

"A chain is as strong as its weakest link, huh?" Sam meditated. "And if you want to break a chain you break it at the weakest link. Uh, huh."

So his mind was made up about this trio. He would, if necessary, shoot it out with DeLana and Dorsey, but he believed now that he preferred to match

# THE PERMANENT DEPUTY

(*Continued from page 147*)

his wits, nimble enough, with the fat wits of Styers. It was borne in on him that he was a stranger in a strange land and he might not be able to account satisfactorily for a shooting affray in which he engaged. So far as outward appearances went, the three men were respectable guests at a high-toned hotel. The weakest link stuff looked like the best bet, Sam told himself.

His musings were interrupted by the noise of a heavy object being dragged across the floor. It was, Sam decided, the table. Then there was a sound as if another object had been placed on it.

"Is that darn fool comin' up here?" Sam questioned in amazement. "Has he got a hunch that I am up here and is he comin' after me? Mebbe my guesses are all wrong. Well, by gosh, he *is* comin', but for a fact he can't think I'm here. He'd know I could plug him or whack him the minute he come above the trap."

That was an apparent fact, but it was also an apparent fact that Styers was coming up. Sam crawled back from the door just as it began to move slowly. Styers' head and then his shoulders appeared above the opening. He put his hands on each side of him, palms down, and rose till the floor was level with his hips. As Sam had guessed, he had placed a chair on the table. Even with this advantage, it was quite a job for the fat man to negotiate the last lap of his upward journey. He was wheezing and puffing when he finally drew himself through the door. He sat down beside it and got his breath. Then he scrambled to his knees and cast a glance around the room. His eyes took in Sam's figure huddled under the eaves. A whisper of fear escaped his lips; it was like the escape of steam from a kettle's mouth.

"Is that you, Mr. Rainey?" he asked.

"It's me, Mr. Rainey," Sam answered. "This seems a fittin' time for me to leave here, you, Mr. Styers. What'll I do? Put you to sleep with the butt of my gun?"

"Oh, don't do that," Styers wheezed. "I didn't know you were up here, Mr. Rainey. I wouldn't have disturbed you if I had known."

"For once you are tellin' the truth."

"I didn't want to come out here tonight," Styers complained. "Those other boys made me. They've gone outside to look for you. They'll kill you if you don't escape them."

"So I reckoned from their idle remarks," said Sam. "Well, I'm leavin'. What'll you do when I'm gone? Holler?"

"No—oh, no. I'll keep my mouth shut."

"If I was built that way, I'd whack you over the head," Sam declared. "But it's sickenin' business to whack a defenseless man. Mind, you keep your mouth shut and close the door after I have dropped down."

"I'll do it. Indeed I will."

"Indeed you better or I won't be so easy on you next time."

Sam lowered himself through the door and jumped from the table to the floor. Looking up he saw Styers close the trap. Sam set the chair against the wall and pushed the table back to its former position. Then, with his gun in his hand, he opened the front door and peered outside. A moment later he went down the road among the trees. For a space he stood motionless. Then he began to work his way slowly toward the spot where he had left his horse.

From time to time he glanced behind and about him. He was halted in his progress when one of these glances picked out a light among the trees to the rear of the house. If his eyes had not been keen and if he had not happened to look in just that direction at that exact moment, he would not have seen the light. It was the barest flicker. One of the men, Sam perceived, had flashed on his light and flashed it off.

As he started toward his horse again, his eyes roamed the thicket where the light had been and on each side of that spot. He gained his horse, however, without having seen the light again. The horse was beyond him, nibbling grass as far as the rope would reach. Sam quickened his steps so that he might clap a hand over the animal's nostrils, but he was not quick enough. Sensing his nearness, the horse lifted its head and gave vent to a slobbering

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whinny. Drawing his knife, Sam cut the rope near the bridle. His eyes roved the thicket, but he saw no light. Nor did he hear a sound. The intense silence of the hour before the dawn lay among the trees.

Sam mounted slowly, his eyes still roving. With his gun in one hand and the bridle-rein in the other, he started the horse down the road toward the ragtown, keeping close to the far side so that he and the animal would be in the deeper dark as much as possible.

He rode past the house in safety. Apparently Styers, too frightened to do otherwise, was keeping his word, for there was no sound from the house. Sam could imagine the fat man quaking with terror in the attic.

Fifty feet beyond the house there was a cleared space on the righthand side of the road. Sam knew that he would be silhouetted against the night sky for a moment, but he could not help it. He believed the men were behind him anyhow. Striking the horse sharply, he started past the open place. He was at once conscious of a beam of light in the road. It flickered there and disappeared. There was the crackling of branches beneath running feet. Then bullets poured out of the woods. Sam flattened himself on the horse's back, struck him again and the animal dashed away. Sam was unscathed.

## CHAPTER VIII

Shaved, bathed, togged out in his store clothes, Sam Rainey sat in the lobby of the hotel smoking a cigarette. It was evening three days later. Sam had hugged the hotel while he had let those three days slip by; for the events at the lonely house had given him pause.

His would have been a slower mind than it was if he had not perceived that he was playing a bigger game than he had at first thought he was playing. He was convinced now that he was not mixed up merely with a trio of crooked gamblers. Crooked gamblers didn't risk life terms in the penitentiary just to get even with a man who had forced them to disgorge. If they had only wanted to get their money back, they would have gone about it in a safer way. They would not have tried to murder him; they would have held him up.

But these men were intent upon murder. For some reason best known to themselves, they wanted to get him out of the way. They were ready to take any risk to do that. Sam had no great longing to be killed; he was at the high flush of youth; life still looked good to him. On the other hand, he didn't want to land in the penitentiary himself and he believed that if he killed one of those men or even wounded him that was where he would land. They were three to one. The others, supposing he killed one, would swear his liberty away.

The law checked him even from defending himself in those circumstances. The law even kept him from carrying a gun. A man might safely carry a gun when he was sixty miles from a railroad in the cattle country. In the city it was different. He had read in the papers numerous times of men having been legally punished for carrying concealed weapons. Therefore Sam found himself a good deal out of his element.

So, puzzled as to what he should do, he had remained in the hotel. Daily he had seen the three men, sometimes together, sometimes in pairs, once in a while alone. DeLana and Dorsey had looked at him with open hostility. Styers had been apprehensive. Once or twice he had seemed on the point of speaking to Sam, but had edged away when Sam looked at him expectantly.

His cigarette finished now, he rose and started for the cafeteria. Halfway to the door he saw Styers coming toward him. There was no hesitation in Styers' manner now. Sam returned to his chair and sat down. Styers came up to him and dropped into the next chair.

"I've been wanting to speak to you several times, Mr. Rainey," the fat man said, "but seemed like I didn't get the chance."

"You've been on the point of doing it a number of times," Sam rejoined. "I didn't see nobody stopping you."

"I was afraid DeLana and Dorsey would see me," Styers said. "They

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have gone out to-night. That gives me a chance."

"Well, what can I do for you?" Sam asked icily.

The fat man was offensive to him. He was capable of fawning. A fawning man always reminded Sam of some sneaking, creeping animal. He could not abide such a man. As between Styers and the two other men he preferred to deal with either of those. In a way they were fighters, hard, bold on occasion. Also they had whatever merit there was in recklessness. Styers was about as reckless as a pea in a pod.

"For one thing," Styers said, "I wanted to ask you how long you were going to be here."

"Just as long as it suits my fancy."

"Are you going to keep up your fight with me and those two other men?"

"I been as meek as a new-born wabbling lamb for the last three days, haven't I?" Sam asked

"You have been doing very well," Styers said. "But you persist in remaining at the hotel."

"Ain't it a public place?"

"I suppose it is."

"Styers," Sam said, "what's the game of you an' your two precious sidekickers. You ain't no professional gamblers. But you're up to some crooked business. What is it? What's the big idea in you having a hang-out at the lonely house?"

"Why the house belongs to Mr. Dorsey," Styers said. "We just go out there to get away from the noise and confusion of the city."

"You got away from it the other night, didn't you?" Sam jeered.

"There would have been no confusion if you hadn't been there."

"How'd you get out of the attic?" Sam grinned. "Did Dorsey and De Lana have to give you a hand?"

"No; as soon as I heard the shooting I knew you and the boys were having it. I knew you wouldn't be back. I let myself down from the attic door and dropped to the floor. It knocked the breath out of me but I was all right by the time the boys got back."

"Mad were they?"

"Furious."

A smile wreathed Sam's lips as he looked across the lobby. Getting his enemy "mad" had always been a pleasant occupation with him. He wished he might have heard them rave.

Then the smile died from his lips. Beside him, he heard Styers breathing a little noisily through parted lips. Sam glanced at him and found him staring intently at Sam's profile. There was an eager look in the man's small eyes. It dawned on Sam that this was no casual talk. There was purpose behind it. He had been a fool to think that Styers would engage him in talk just for the sake of talk. He turned on Styers swiftly and his eyes blazed.

"Well, what's your game right this minute, Styers?" he demanded. "What you pullin' off this pow wow for?"

"Why, I just wanted you to know that I, at least, bear you no ill will," Styers stammered.

"Your a liar by that clock over yonder," Sam said. "You got something up your sleeve. What is it?"

"N—nothing. Not a thing. I'll prove it to you. Dorsey and DeLana have gone out. They won't be back till late. I'll go out myself. So far as we are concerned, you will have the hotel to yourself. That ought to suit you."

"So far as I'm concerned, you fellas can camp out here as much as you please. If I've got you under my eye I can tell what you're doing."

"Well, I'll be going."

Styers rose. Sam plucked him by the sleeve and pulled him rather forcibly back into his seat.

"While we're makin' this talk, I got a question to ask you, ol' sport," Sam said. "What's your business? How do you make your living?"

"Well, that's an impertinent question but I'll answer it," Styers said. "I'm a traveling salesman. I sell oil-well, mining and mill supplies."

"You travel through this country?"

"All through the southwest."

"How's business this trip?"

Sam snapped the question with the effect of the crack of the lash of a long

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# THE PERMANENT DEPUTY

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whip. Styers started and leaned back from him. The man's eyes were wide. That pallor which seemed to leave his face flabby and old blotted out his color. He put a trembling hand to his chin.

"Why, wh-what do you mean?" he asked.

Sam got to his feet. He stood smiling down at the other man; it was not a pleasant smile; it thinned the lips and bared white shut teeth. Sam's eyes, too, were icy cold now. And he stood motionless without a tremor of his young body. Styers could not help but contrast this with his own shaken condition. His nerves had been bad lately. Anything unusual could set him shivering.

"I just meant," said Sam, "that I wondered if some of your old customers weren't missing you this trip."

As he walked away, he caught Styers' blank stare and he knew that the calculated shot had gone home. He had given Styers something to think about.

He went into the cafeteria and as he sat down he saw Styers leave the hotel.

"Yeh," said Sam, "carry that to your two sidekickers an' let 'em chew on it."

Sam Rainey did not know it, but he was a marked man in that cafeteria. He was different from the general run. Some of the waitresses were pretty; some were not; they averaged up with any group of girls. Some were romantic; some were hard. Sam had always eaten at a table near the door. There was a counter along one side of the room, but Sam had elected to sit at table, being as he had supposed himself a gent with nothing but time to kill. When his time had begun to be occupied with the girl in blue and the three crooks, he had continued to eat at the table. And, as it happened, he drew one of the romantic girls as his waitress. She thought he was a "cattle king." He always left a piece of silver.

This girl would have let her hair grow long and thrown away her rouge box before she would have injured Sam, but you never can tell. Fate picks its own instruments.

She bustled up to Sam and inquired after his appetite and told him what was especially good on the mainyoo and Sam ordered some of it and she served it and Sam ate it—and then the yellow negro entered on the scene.

There are blacks that are good and blacks that are bad and yellow niggers who are good and yellow niggers who are bad. This was a bad yellow nigger. He had been in the hotel but a week. He had been kicked out of his last place for bootlegging secretly. A piece of money would hire him to do almost anything. At the present reading, he had a fifty-dollar bill in his pocket and that bill had not been there the night before.

"Mr. Sam Rainey," he called. "Mr. Sam Rainey."

Sam was a little bewildered. He didn't like having his name bawled out publicly like that.

"You want me, boy?" he demanded.

"Mr. Sam Rainey?" the boy asked.

"That's me."

"Call for you on the booth telephone," the boy said.

Sam's heart leaped. The girl in blue? Mebbe. He rose hastily and went to the booth telephone. The romantic waitress came forward and looked at what remained of Sam's supper. He had eaten all the solids and his coffee cup was empty. It'd be nice to have a hot cup ready for him when he returned. She served the cup and then she was called to another table.

"Mr. Mondell! Mr. Mondell!"

The boy had gone to the far end of the room and was now returning toward Sam's table. No Mr. Mondell responded to his call. Passing Sam's table, he flashed a yellow hand over the fresh cup of coffee. Then he disappeared into the lobby on swift feet.

In the telephone booth Sam had taken up the receiver and had said "Hello."

"Mr. Rainey?" said a woman's voice.

"That's me, ma'am."

"This is Miss Hale."

"Who, ma'am?"

"Miss Katherine Hale."

"Why, ma'am, I don't know nobody by that name," said Sam.

"Why, the idea! The girl in blue."

"Oh!"

It was not a blank exclamation. Sam came up straight before the telephone.

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## The Permanent Deputy

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Every sense was alert. He thought of Styers, Dorsey, DeLana.

"You know now, don't you?" the voice went on.

"I don't."

"Why how strange you are. Last time I saw you, you didn't act like this."

Sam Rainey was not gallant just now. He slammed up the receiver and stepped into the lobby. He didn't know what he expected. He had a feeling that he ought to be ready for something. But nothing happened. The lobby was as serene as a lobby ought to be.

Sam wiped his forehead and went back to the cafeteria. He sat down and was pleased to find a fresh cup of coffee in front of him. He picked it up. He felt the need of a stimulant.

For Sam was not a victim of surprise or wonder now. He wasn't trying to puzzle out who the woman was who had called him. Of course it had not been the girl in blue—*his* girl in blue. Indeed, no! He would have known her voice anywhere. Hers was a gentle voice. This had been the voice of a female.

Then a great surge of longing swept through Sam Rainey's manly frame. He wished it had been *his* girl. So her name was Katherine Hale, eh? Fittin' name for her. She—er—well—Sam put down the cup and stared at it.

"Dog-gone," he said, "I'm in love!"

With a hand which, for the first time within his recollection, was decidedly unsteady, Sam raised the cup and drained its contents. He had swallowed the last drop before he realized that the coffee had a peculiar taste.

(*To be Continued*)


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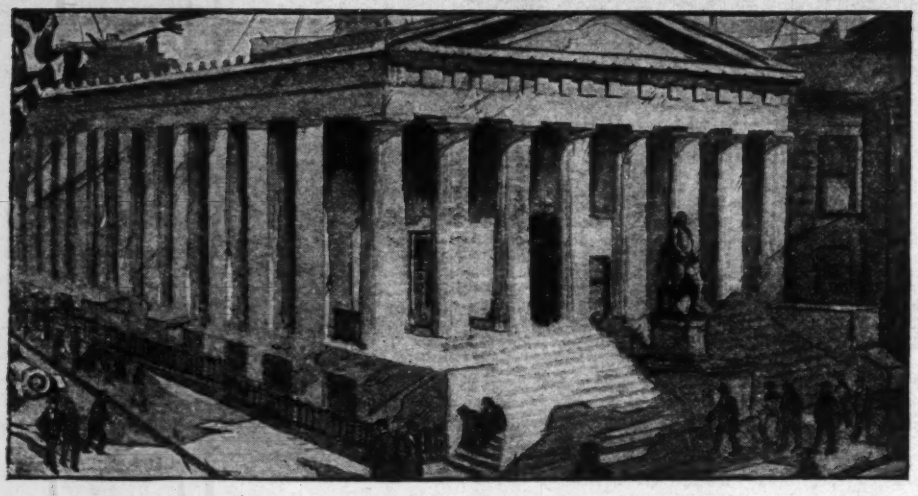

# THE POINTS OF A BOND

*By* PAUL TOMLINSON

IF you have ever been to a horse show or a dog show or a cattle show and stood near the show ring, you will know that the judges make their awards on the basis of certain points as exhibited by the horse or dog or other animal before them. In an animal, size, shape, eyes, coat, disposition, and general conformation and appearance are the things that count, the points which are observed, and as a result of which the exhibit is adjudged a good or poor specimen. Animals, however, are not the only things which have points. Bonds have them and the prospective investor must be the judge of them and decide whether or not they conform to a standard sufficiently high to warrant his choosing them as an investment.

First of all there is certain information about the issuing company which it is well to have. What kind of business is it engaged in? When was it incorporated and where? Why was it organized? Is it an operating company or a holding company? Is it strategically located for the purpose of its business? If it is a railroad or a public utility corporation, does it serve a prosperous and populous territory? All of these questions have bearing upon the value of the bond as an investment and the prospective purchaser will find the answer to them not only interesting and instructive, but exceedingly valuable.

The next point to consider is the capitalization of the issuing company. That is to say, the various kinds of bonds authorized and their amounts and the amount of stock, both preferred and common. Bank loans and all notes payable are also important items to consider. As you are interested in a particular bond issue you should find out what prior liens there are, which should include the amount authorized or outstanding of any other issues which outrank the one you are considering.

Another important question is under what conditions, if any, more bonds can be issued; for what purpose was the particular issue you are considering sold; was it for improvements to the property, for additions, for extensions, or possibly for refunding operations which means the paying off of some prior obligation with the proceeds of the sale of the issue in question. Inquire into the total amount of bonds of the issue which can be sold altogether. In other words, what is the total amount of bonds authorized. Inquire, too, as to sinking fund provisions, what amount if any, it is stipulated must be set aside for the paying off of outstanding bonds.

The purpose for which the bonds are sold is something into which it is always

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# THE POINTS OF A BOND

(*Continued from page 156*)

worth while to inquire. The answer to this inquiry explains how the money raised is to be spent and it is then possible to form an opinion as to whether or not the value of the property will be enhanced. Suppose, for instance, that $5,000,000 of bonds are sold and the money spent on new factory equipment. The chances are this equipment will make greater earnings possible and, at the same time, the property securing the bond issues will be increased in value by the additions. Both of these things have a direct bearing upon the investment value of the bond.

The business of the corporation is an important matter—that is to say the standing of the business, its equipment and capacity for development and growth. The location of the plant enters in here and whether it is favorably located has a direct bearing sometimes upon the success of the enterprise. Its shipping facilities, its nearness to the markets and to the source of its raw materials all affect it materially. On the matter of equipment information should be specific, for the capacity of a business is in direct relation to the equipment it has for the production of the goods it has to sell, whether these goods are electric power, freight service, passenger service or any definite manufactured article.

Earnings are naturally one of the most important things to consider in connection with the purchase of any bond, and the prospective buyer should find out how earnings have averaged over a period of years and by how much they exceed the interest charges on the corporation's funded obligations. To be really conservative the investor should buy only bonds the interest on which is regularly earned at least twice over. If he examines earnings over a period of years, he should note whether they have remained constant or have shown an increase or decrease.

It is well to find out the sources from which earnings are derived. If the corporation has many different branches of activity, how did these branches contribute to the sum total of earnings, and did certain ones bring in more than their just proportion? One very good way to satisfy oneself that earnings are amply sufficient for the payment of interest is to find out what dividends have been paid on the stock issues, for how long a time, and whether regularly or not. Interest, of course, must be paid before any dividends can be declared, so that if money for dividends has been available over and above interest charges for a considerable period of time, appearances at least indicate ample earnings for the bond interest.

What is the value of the corporation's property compared with the total of bonds outstanding? What equity is there for the particular issue you have in mind? Equity is the difference between the amount of outstanding bonds and the value of the property. For example, if a corporation has properties worth five million dollars and mortgage bonds outstanding to the amount of three million dollars, the bonds enjoy an equity equal to the amount of two million dollars.

The prospective purchaser, of course, should know exactly how his bonds are secured, what the property is, where it is, and what it is worth. Is the issue he has in mind a first lien on this property or is it subject to some other issue or issues? If there is a collateral security as well as real property value behind the bonds it does no harm to inquire into the value of the stocks and bonds of which the collateral consists.

If the corporation is a public utility the investor should inquire into the matter of franchises. Are they perpetual or do they run for a term of years and, if so, for how long a term? Are their provisions favorable or unfavorable to the corporation? Suppose, for instance, a franchise could be revoked. Then operations would cease and the company become scarcely more than a name. If it is a railroad or industrial corporation, how is it incorporated and what does its charter permit? If the lawyers in charge know their business this need not concern the investor.

What he should examine with considerable care, however, is the management of the company whose obligations he is thinking of purchasing. Is the

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2. "How To Judge Southern Mortgage Bonds" is a booklet published by the Adair Realty & Trust Company of Atlanta, Georgia. It explains how to secure 7% with safety. Write for this booklet to the Adair Realty & Trust Company, Dept. L-3, Healey Bldg., Atlanta, Ga.

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**McCLURE'S MAGAZINE**

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## The Points of a Bond

(*Continued from page 158*)

board of directors made up of able and experienced men who are familiar with the kind of business they are directing? Their standing in the business world is something to think about and as their names are always available it is an easy matter to satisfy oneself about them.

These are the main points of a bond and the investor should study and consider them as carefully as a prospective buyer of a horse would examine the points of the animal. All the various points are of value in determining the final investment rating of a bond. Some naturally are more important than others, and it may be that weakness in one spot may not be sufficiently serious to hurt the investment value of the bond. You may decide that that particular weak point is being strengthened, and feel justified in ignoring it. On the other hand, strength in certain directions may be entirely offset by weakness in others, and to such extent that the bond cannot be considered in the investment class at all. For example, there might be valuable property securing the issue but unsatisfactory earnings, and without earnings interest payments cannot be made indefinitely. Earnings might be good but the security doubtful, and in case of business depression earnings might fail and the bond be of little or no value.

So it goes. The various points must be considered separately and then as a whole and in their relation one to another. Final judgment must be rendered on the basis of what the net result of all these various points amounts to. Perhaps a regular score can be devised and a certain value assigned to each item on the scale of one hundred, and then at the end the score be totaled and the investor may see how close to one hundred it comes.

It would be difficult to find a perfect bond, but there are many which will come very reasonably close and by using such a scale of points the purchaser could safeguard himself against many securities which would immediately show themselves to be unsuited to his circumstances. On the other hand it would help in the selection of those which would be appropriate for him to own.

# FINANCIAL QUESTIONS

## ANSWERED BY JAMES O. PARSONS

**This department of financial advice freely offers its services to all readers. Send your query to the Financial Editor of McCLURE'S MAGAZINE, 80 Lafayette Street, New York City, and you will receive a prompt reply. Correspondence will be held confidential, but investment questions of general interest will be published anonymously.**

IN looking over the stock quotations of the New York Stock Exchange I note price changes in certain stocks. My thought is that by buying, say five or ten shares of certain stocks at the low price and selling at an advance of 5 or 6 points, it might be possible to make a little extra money from time to time as there seems to be considerable change in the prices of these stocks. My idea is not to buy them for the dividend possibilities, but merely to turn them over within a short time. What do brokers ordinarily charge for buying and selling? Can sales always be readily made? My salary is a little over $50 a week. I am single but do not care to lose.

A. Our rule is not to give advice in matters of speculation. In your case we will make an exception for the reason that you are apparently a novice with little or no knowledge of the inherent dangers of speculating in securities. If you do not care to lose you might as well abandon your idea of taking a flier in stocks for one who speculates is taking as much chance of losing as he is of winning. To be successful in speculation one must be able to buy at the right time and sell at the right time, or vice versa if the trader is playing on the short side of the market. This may sound easy of accomplishment to the novice, but the veteran operator in stocks will tell you he considers himself extremely lucky if he is right in his prognostications 60 per cent of the time. Speculation at best is a hard game to beat even by the experienced. For the inexperienced it is next to impossible to beat. Even the most successful of speculative traders in stocks, men who make it a business of trading in the market from day to day, take heavy losses at times. These are operators with years of experience behind them. If they find it difficult to win what chance has a novice like yourself? Our advice to you is to adopt some other way of building a fortune. It would be far more advisable to undertake a methodical plan of saving, the funds to be put into prime investment bonds. By adopting such a plan you will save yourself much worry and also probably save your pocketbook from losses.

The New York Stock Exchange regulations, we are informed, provide for a commission of $7.50 per 100 shares bought or sold of stock quoted at less than $10 a share. This amounts to $15 for the "round turn" in the stock. For stocks selling at $10 to $25 a share the commission is $15 for each 100 shares or $30 for the complete transaction of buying and selling the stock. On stock selling at $125 or higher the commission is $20 for each 100 shares or $40 for the "round turn."

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A. We do not undertake to vouch for the safety and strength of every individual savings and loan association. As a general proposition, however, we believe that these associations are a sound form of investment and at the same time offer the public an attractive way of saving money. In other words they are helpful in promoting thrift. And they go further than that when they are in the form of building and loan associations for they aid in the financing of home building. The Michigan Mutual Savings Association, according to the clipping you have sent us, operates under the supervision of the State of Michigan.

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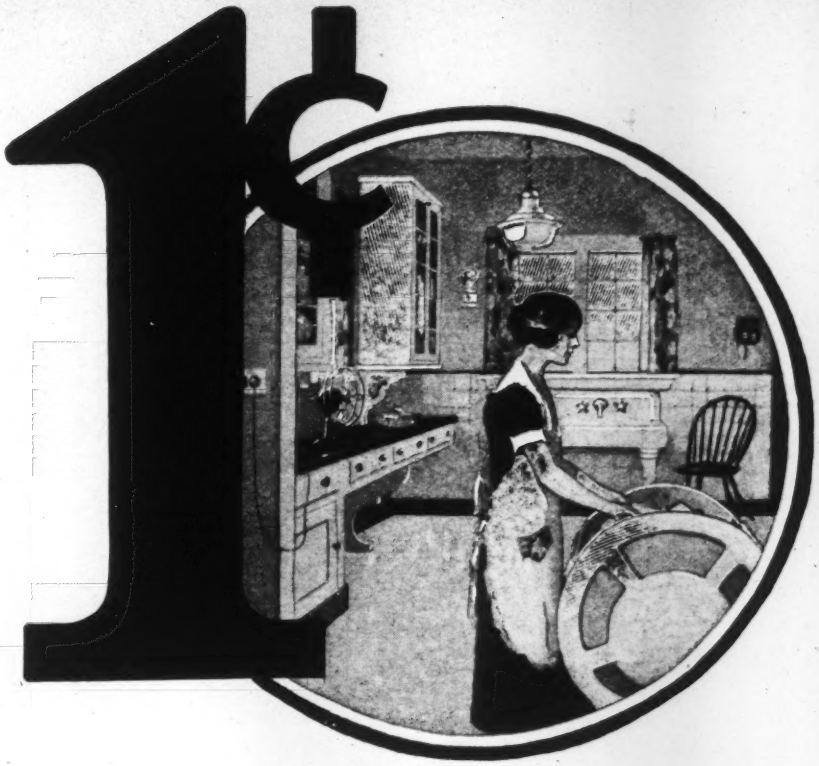


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